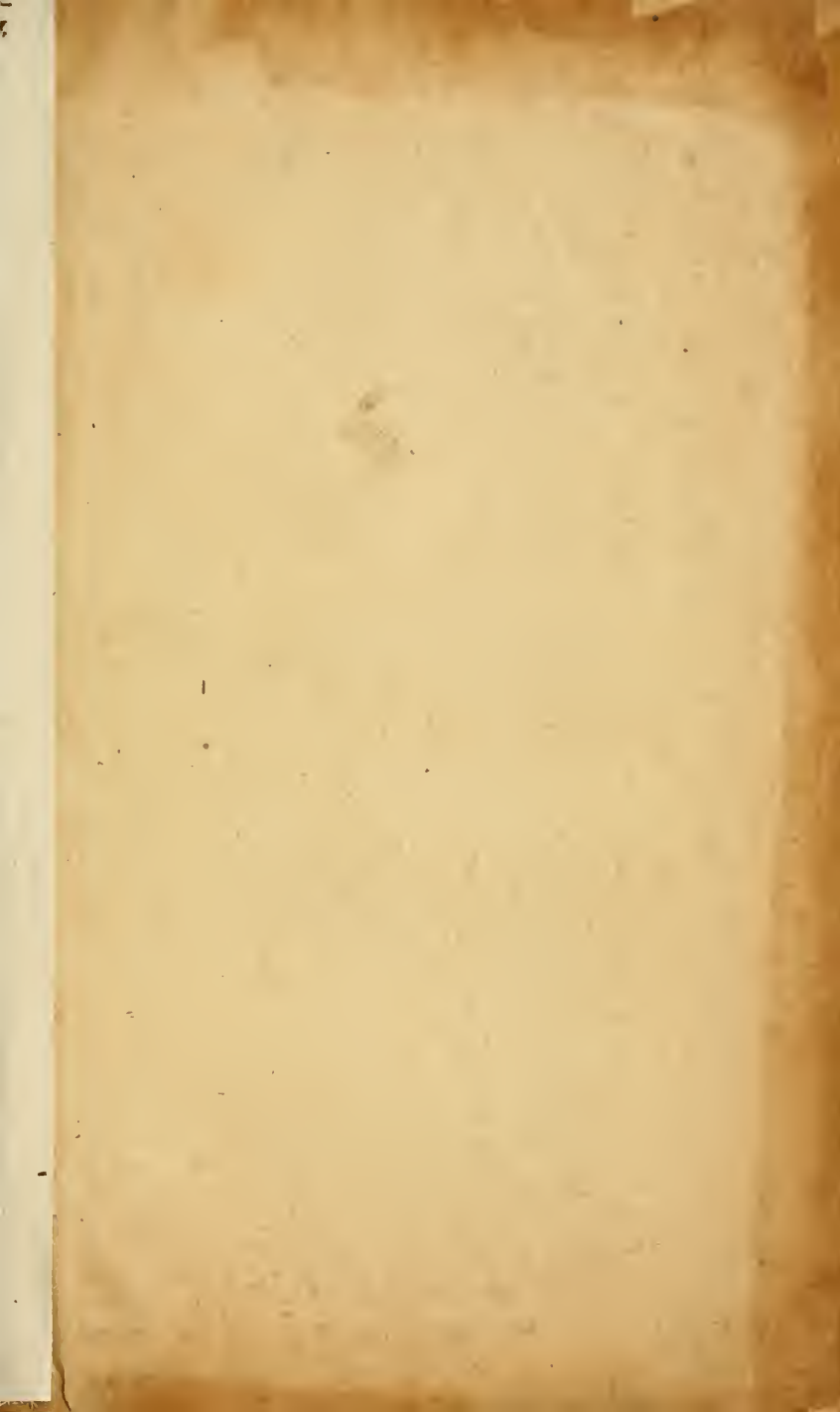


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T H E
L I F E

O F
L U C I L I O

(alias *FULIUS CÆSAR*)

V A N I N I,

Burnt for ATHEISM at *Thoulouse*.

W I T H

An Abstract of his Writings.

B E I N G

The Sum of the Atheistical Doctrine taken
from PLATO, ARISTOTLE, AVERROES, CAR-
DANUS and POMPONATIUS'S Philosophy.

W I T H

A Confutation of the same; and Mr. BAYLE'S
Arguments in Behalf of VANINI, compleatly
answered. *By David Durand, D.D.*

Translated from the *French* into *English*.

L O N D O N :

Printed for W. MEADOWS at the *Angel* in Corn-
hill. MDCCXXX. (Price 2 s.)

Vanini was a poor Neapolitan
Theist and a fierce disputant on the
quiddities and universalities, but
had not a vein in him that tended
to Atheism. His notion of God
is of the most orthodox Theology and
the most approved. — to quote his own
words. God is his own Principle and
end; Agent of the one and the other
without need of either: eternal without
existing in time; With him there is neither
Past nor future. He is every where and
in everything, having created every
thing. Immutable, infinite, without
parts; His will is his power &c &c.

His great learning & blunt reasoning
drew on him the hatred of several Catholic
Divines who were alarmed by the number
of his disciples. Garasce an implacable
Jesuite set on one Franconio to accuse
him of being an atheist and Gramont
the President or judge without being
able to bring any proof against Vanini
who on his trial would by a straw the
certain existence of a God without whom
there could be neither motion nor vegetation.
Gramont said he spoke what he did
not think & sentenced him to the stake.

Voltaire



T O T H E R E A D E R.



ANY undoubtedly will wonder, how any Body would undertake to write the Life of Vanini; a Person who merited rather to be buried in perpetual Oblivion, and whose Name has been both infamous to Christianity, and abhorred by all the honest and well meaning part of Mankind. But if it be considered, to what purposes his miserable End has been converted, and what use has been made of it, by opposing his Sham-Martyrdom to an infinite Number of true ones, in order to depreciate the most excellent Religion, and to establish and propagate the modish Doctrine of those vulgarly (though wrongfully) called Free-Thinkers: I am persuaded, I say, upon this Consideration, the necessity will appear, that those Facts should be represented in a fair and honest manner, to

vindicate the righteous Cause from base Aspersions.

That this Piece has all the Characters requisite to distinguish its worth and value, the perusal will sufficiently testify. In it is perceivable an accurate and impartial Judgment, free from all Insinuations or Suppositions, that either directly or consequentially savour of prejudice of Education: Our Author seems to be so cautious of avoiding such an Imputation (not only in this, but all his other Writings) when an opportunity offers, or an objection against the Christian Belief falls in his way; that he, with the greatest impartiality illustrates it, urging it with the utmost Energy and Force, to leave the Reader entirely satisfied with his reply, and to eradicate compleatly the most dangerous Doubts and Perplexities.

Vanini in his life time was famous all over Europe for his sophistical Writings, which were new and uncommon in their kind, and particularly adapted to the Taste of that Age. They were wrote in a good Latin Style, and so artfully contrived, that under the pretext of defending Christianity and Morality, he slyly insinuated the rankest atheistical Principles, aiming at nothing less, than to destroy all Religion, even the Natural not excepted. The Hardships he underwent on that Account, are by some cried up for Martyrdom,

Martyrdom, though if we may believe Gramond, who was then first President of the Parliament of Thoulouse, he would have recanted when he found Sentence of Death was past on him, which was rejected, they knowing him to be a malicious Dissembler.

He set out from Naples with twelve Confederates, as reprobate as himself, to disperse all over the World, in the manner of the Apostles, his pernicious Doctrine. You will find him a Man of Learning, very Ambitious, Subtle, of an easy Address, jovial in Conversation, and full of Spirit and Activity, which the various and surprising Adventures of his Life sufficiently testify; and endowed with such bright natural Faculties, that History can scarce produce his Equal: But as he misapplied his Talent, Providence made him as notorious in his Punishment; his Execution being so terrible that one cannot read it without being shock'd.

He was a staunch Disciple of Plato, Aristotle, Averroes, Cardanus and Pomponatius, whom he copies every where, upon the Creation, the origin of Man, and other Matters relating to natural Philosophy. But when he quotes 'em, to decide in religious Affairs, he is quite absurd and ridiculous; witness the famous Horoscope from Cardan, who pretended to state the nativity of Christ, thereby to
prove,

prove, that his extraordinary Qualities were not owing to his divine Nature, but the Constellation, that prevailed at his Birth; which was calculated to subvert the Christian Religion.

His Writings were numerous, as appears from the Catalogue at the end of this Piece. Most of them are lost, and those that are now remaining, viz. his Amphitheatre and Dialogues, the Author has taken Care to examine and confute in their strongest Arguments. In short you'll see, how the various Systems of the chief atheistical Writers have been applied to account mechanically for the miraculous Performances in the Old and New Testament, and the absurdity of such Solutions exposed. And, I may venture to affirm, you'll find in this Piece not only Entertainment for the Unlearned, but also many Observations and Tracts not unworthy the most Curious.





T H E C O N T E N T S.

I. <i>O</i> ccasion of the <i>Writing this Piece.</i>	Pag. 1.
II. <i>The Plan intended.</i>	4.
III. <i>Vanini's Country and Parents.</i>	ib.
IV. <i>His Study and Teachers.</i>	5.
— <i>His contempt of Thomas Aquinas.</i>	7.
V. <i>Received a Priest.</i>	ib.
— <i>His Method of Preaching and his Averroistical Ladder.</i>	8.
— <i>Refuted by Mr. de Fontenelle.</i>	9.
VI. <i>Studies the Law.</i>	ib.
VII. <i>His Poverty at Padua praise-worthy.</i>	10.
VIII. <i>His favourite Authors, Aristotle.</i>	ib.
— <i>Averroes.</i>	11.
— <i>Pomponatius.</i>	ib.
— <i>Cardanus.</i>	12.
— <i>Opinion of the Latter concerning the Immortality of the Soul.</i>	13.
— <i>Softened by Mr. Bayle.</i>	ib.
— <i>Opinion of Pomponatius on the same Subject.</i>	16.
— <i>Mr. Bayle's Opinion of these two Authors better than that of Vanini.</i>	18.
— <i>If we sometimes attack what we feign to believe.</i>	19.
IX. <i>Vanini begins his impious Apostleship.</i>	ib.
— <i>If he made it Publick at Thoulouse.</i>	20.
X. <i>His feigned and true Voyages.</i>	21.
— <i>He censures the Schisms subsisting between Christians.</i>	21.
— <i>Vanini's</i>	

The CONTENTS:

— Vanini's false Courage at Geneva.	Pag. 22.
XI. Merry Thought they have of that Town in Spain.	ib.
XII. He goes to England, where he is imprisoned for forty nine Days.	23.
XIII. Every where mistrusted on account of his A-verroism.	24.
XIV. Becomes a Fryar, and dishonours that State after a detestable manner.	25.
XV. He cometh to Paris, where he corrupts many People.	26.
— Idea that Garasse gives us of Vanini's Conversation.	26 ¹
XVI. He is made Almoner to the Marshal Bas- sompierre.	ib.
XVII. Becomes suspected by his Writings, which the Sorbonne condemns to be burn'd.	ib.
XVIII. Retires to Thoulouse.	29.
XIX. Imprudence of Vanini and Contradictions of the Libertines.	ib.
XX. The Testimony of Gramond and Borri- chius.	30.
— The authentick Acts of the Process are want- ing.	31.
XXI. Writings of Vanini.	32.
— A merry Wish of his, he would have been a Bastard.	33.
— Feigns to be Orthodox as other Libertines do.	36.
XXII. A general view of his Amphitheatre.	37:
— Opinion of the Learned about that Book.	ib.
— That of the Author.	38:
The Preface is Vain-Glorious.	ib.
XXIII. He attacks the Existence of a principal and intelligent Mover.	39.
XXIV. He defines the Deity in order to destroy his Existence.	40.
XXV. An	

The CONTENTS.

XXV. <i>An Answer to that Definition.</i>	Pag. 41.
XXVI. <i>A cool Censure of Vanini's concerning what is said, That the Mercy of the Lord is above all his Works.</i>	43.
XXVII. <i>The Horoscope, or a Calculation of the Nativity of the Christian Religion made by Cardanus.</i>	44.
— <i>Looked upon by Vanini as dangerous.</i>	48.
XXVIII. <i>A Refutation of that Calculation.</i>	ib.
XXIX. <i>Vanini is the first Author among the Moderns of the Manichean Objections.</i>	50.
— <i>To which he answers upon Spinoza's Principles.</i>	ib.
XXX. <i>He makes God the Author of Sin.</i>	51.
— <i>Laughs at Predestination.</i>	ib.
XXXI. <i>And at Christ's Miracles:</i>	52.
— <i>Refuted on that Subject.</i>	ib.
XXXII. <i>He is merry about Hell.</i>	53.
XXXIII. <i>He is an Hypocrite in his Amphitheatre, which he despises in his Dialogues.</i>	ib.
XXXIV. <i>A view of his Dialogues, their Approbation.</i>	54.
— <i>The Dedication beggarly and flattering.</i>	55.
— <i>Comparisons drawn from the Sun already in Vogue in Vanini's Days.</i>	ib.
XXXV. <i>The Preface and Encomium.</i>	56.
XXXVI. <i>The Plan of the Book.</i>	57.
XXXVII. <i>At first seems to be a Materialist.</i>	59.
— <i>He believes the form of the Heaven to be its Soul, and concludes for the Eternity of the World.</i>	ib.
— <i>Attributes that belief to the Ancient Philosophers.</i>	60.
— <i>Deifies Nature though he esteems it disorder-ed.</i>	60.

The CONTENTS.

— <i>Treats Religion as a human Invention.</i>	P. 61.
XXXVIII. <i>A short Refutation of that System by Mr. Barnard.</i>	62.
XXXIX. <i>Origin of Mankind according to Di- odorus Siculus and Vanini.</i>	63.
— <i>Idle Notions of the Atheists on that Subject.</i>	64.
— <i>If the first Men went on All four.</i>	65.
— <i>A Remarkable Case of a young Man among the Bears.</i>	66.
XL. <i>Profanation of Vanini about our first Parents.</i>	ib.
XLI. <i>His odious Paralel between the Empire of God and that of the Devil.</i>	67.
— <i>Beautified and Illustrated by Mr. Bayle.</i>	68.
XLII. <i>A Refutation of said Paralel.</i>	69.
XLIII. <i>Vanini's Jest's concerning the Immortali- ty of the Soul.</i>	71.
— <i>Defence of the German Nation.</i>	ib.
XLIV. <i>He Censures the Law of Moses.</i>	72.
XLV. <i>And the Christian Religion.</i>	73.
— <i>And its Martyrs.</i>	ib.
— <i>And Marriages.</i>	ib.
— <i>The Idea he gives us of Anti-Christ.</i>	73.
— <i>And of Jesus-Christ.</i>	74.
— <i>And of the Eucharist.</i>	ib.
XLVI. <i>And of the Apostles about the gift of Tongues.</i>	ib.
XLVII. <i>And of the Resurrection.</i>	76.
— <i>And of Socrates.</i>	77.
— <i>Wickedness of the atheistical Conjectures.</i>	ib.
XLVIII. <i>He attacks the Doctrine of Devils.</i>	78.
— <i>And of the Pagan Oracles.</i>	79.
— <i>A short account of the different Opinions concern- ing those: And that of Chrysippus.</i>	ib.
— <i>Of</i>	

The C O N T E N T S.

— <i>Of Cicero and Lucian.</i>	Pag. 80.
— <i>Of the Primitive Christians.</i>	ib.
— <i>Of Vanini and Father Tomasin.</i>	ib.
— <i>Of Mr. Vandale and Mr. de Fontenelle.</i>	81.
— <i>Of Father Baltus.</i>	ib.
XLIX <i>Opinion of Vanini concerning the Periodical Returns he attributed to Religions.</i>	82.
— <i>Conversation of the Author with Mr. Bayle.</i>	83.
— <i>That Libertines contradict themselves.</i>	84.
— <i>As doth sometimes Mr. Bayle.</i>	ib..
L. <i>The Idea Vanini gives us of Time.</i>	85.
LI. <i>The Prophane conclusion of the Dialogues.</i>	ib.
— <i>Where he laughs at the Fame of Paradise, Purgatory and Hell, and ends with a luxurious regret.</i>	86.
LII. <i>Vanini's Condemnation related by Gramond, in which he is described as an Atheist.</i>	87.
— <i>A Seducer of Youth.</i>	ib.
— <i>Priest and Debauched.</i>	ib.
— <i>Hypocrite and Prophane.</i>	88.
— <i>Afterwards a Bigot, and Orthodox, through Fear.</i>	89.
— <i>And afterward discovering himself, is a Blasphemer against Jesus Christ.</i>	90.
LIII. <i>The Fact otherwise related by the French Mercury.</i>	92.
— <i>The Relation of Garasse, more conformable to that of Gramond, and consequently more probable. See the Advertisement at the Beginning of the Book.</i>	94.
LIV. <i>A Character of Vanini deduced from what has been related of him, his Body and Mind.</i>	94.
— <i>His Erudition and Poverty.</i>	ib.
— <i>His Hypocrisy and Pride.</i>	96.
— <i>His Profanations and Criticisms.</i>	97.
— <i>He calculates his own Nativity.</i>	98.
— <i>His Morals.</i>	ib.
— <i>Mr.</i>	

The C O N T E N T S.

- *Mr. La Croze's Judgment concerning his Recantations.* Pag. 99.
- *Rigour of the Parliament, and Gramond's Severity.* 100.
- *Vanini's last Hours dreadful.* ib.
- LIV. *Concerning the Latin Apology, which appeared in favour of that Atheist.* ib.
- LIV. *Mr. Bayle's neglects concerning him as well in Relation to the Facts as to the Argumentation.* 103.





T H E
L I F E
O F
LUCILIO VANINI.

To Mr. * * * *.

S I R,



YOU do me more Honour than I deserve, when you ask me again for what I had collected concerning LUCILIO VANINI's Life. You remember that since the Year 1710, I was to have continued *l'Histoire des Ouvrages des Savans*, which Work was always interrupted by the learned Distractions of the Author, and finally stopped by his last Illness; and by the Occupations of his Brother †, who had sustained

The Occa-
sion of this
Work.

† Mr. *Basnage*, Minister of the *French Church* at the *Hague*, made several Abtracts for his Brother the Advocate, who fell ill in 1709.

B

that

that Burthen from time to time, and would no longer be troubled with it. I had then collected some Materials for the Continuation of a Work which deserved my whole Attention, when Providence called me from your City to *Amsterdam*; and a few Months after from *Amsterdam* to *England*.

The History of Vanini, by Mr. Schramm * Among those Materials designed for the Journal, you had heard me speak of a *Latin* Book printed in *Germany*, under the Title of *The Life and Writings of the famous Atheist JULIUS CÆSAR VANINI*; wherein the Author treats of his Birth, his Behaviour, his Education, and of his tragical End; the Whole taken from his Writings, or other Authors worthy of Credit. I made an Abstract of that Book, and being at Work about it, I often wished to see with my own Eyes, the strong and weak Side of VANINI, I mean by reading all his Works. By good Luck I found them in your Library, you was pleased to lend them me, I read them from one end to the other, and I made use of 'em to give my Abstract all the Certainty required from a faithful Journalist. I read my MS. to some of my Friends, who approved it; I do not now remember, if I did not shew it, to you likewise. Be that as it will, having since left your City, and Mr. Mortier, for whom I was to have continued at *Amsterdam*, les *Nouvelles des la Republique des Letres*, being dead, my Abstract was banished among my old Papers.

* *De Vita et Scriptis famosi Athei Julii Cæsaris Vanini tractatus singularis, in quo Genius, & Mores & Studia cum ipsa Morte horrenda à Scriptis suis rarioribus & alijs fide dignis Authoribus selecta sunt, & ne cui offendiculo forent, errores illius simul sunt refutati, à Johanne Mauricio Schramm. Custrini. Typ. & sumpt. Godofredi Heininchii, Regis Regim. Neo-March, Typographi, 1709.*

A new Book, which appeared the Year following, did not at all encourage me to take it from thence. Mr. *de la Crose* published his *Entertainments upon divers Subjects of History, Literature, Religion and Criticism* *. The fourth of his *Entertainments* is *A Dissertation upon Atheism*, which is well worth reading. He speaks there of several Atheists, and VANINI is introduced in his turn. I must own I was a little displeased when I read that Passage of his *Dissertation*, because it seemed to me, that the Author had compiled there with pretty good Judgment, the chief things to be known concerning that Infidel, and taken from me Materials, which I thought the more entertaining and curious, because no one had ever given us any thing in *French* upon that Subject. I condemned therefore my MS. to remain where I had put it, and it was going to rot there at Ease, if you had not asked me for it again in your last Letter. I should yet refuse it you by a Principle of Modesty ; but the Friendship and Obligations I owe you, will not permit it. I chuse rather to revise my MS. to reform it, to correct and even to augment it, than to disappoint you a second time. Besides, Mr. *de la Crose* has omitted several important Remarks, which I have supplied, and perhaps some will rather read VANINI's Life, in a little Volume by itself, than in the middle of a tedious *Dissertation*. After all, Sir, you are Master of the MS. read it with some Attention, and if it doth not please you, do with it as they did with VANINI ; I assure you I shall not take it ill in the least.

* The Book is printed at *Amsterdam*, by *Roger*. 1711.

II. I shall divide into five or six Articles, all what I have to tell you about our *Neapolitan*. I shall at first speak of his Birth, and his Parents, then of his Learning and Præceptors; afterwards of his Travels, then of his Writings, and of the Impiety hid in them, which discovers itself by Degrees; and conclude with his tragical Death, and a View of his Character, in opposition to the Apologies of his Advocate, * and the carelessness of a celebrated Author, who in his *Pensées Sur la Comete* †, has cried up our VANINI for an honest Man and a true Martyr of Atheism: This last Article will perhaps be curious enough. And this is the Method I intend to observe in this Letter: I wish you may not have Reason to repent your Curiosity, nor I my Complaisance.

Vanini's
Birth, his
native
Country
and Parents.

III. LUCILIO VANINI, was born at *Taurisano* § in the Kingdom of Naples, and not at Naples itself, as all the Editions of *Moreri's Dictionary* intimate, not even excepting the last by M. Du Pin **. I place his Birth in the Year 1585, and not 1579, as by an oversight Mr. La Crose has done. The Day and Month are not known, and I guess only at the Year, from a Passage of his *Dialogues upon Nature*, where our Infidel makes *Alexander* his Admirer say to him, you are hardly thirty Years old, and you have enriched the Publick already with I do not know

* M. Arpe. *Apologia pro Julio Casare Vanini, Neapolitano. Cosmopoli. Typis Philaletheis. 1712.*

† Tome 1. Pag. 356. & suivantes de *Pedition de 1704.*

§ 'Tis himself that acquaints us of it in the 56th Dialogue, pag. 424. *Ego cum Taurisanum patriam meamobilissimam & velut in orbis annulo gemmam, peterem.* Mr. de le Crose calls it the City *Taurisano*; but I find no such City in the Maps, but a Market Town of that Name, a few Leagues from *Castro*

** The Edition of 5 Vol. Fol 1713.

how many illustrious Monuments of Learning, which have acquired you a great deal of Honour ! Those Dialogues having been printed at Paris in 1616, it is probable, if he says true, that he came into the World towards the end of 1585, or the beginning of the Year following.

His Fathers Name was *John Baptista Vanini*, ^{His Father:} Steward to Don *Francis de Castro*, Duke of *Taurisano*, Viceroy of *Naples*, and afterwards Ambassador of *Spain* to the Court of *Rome*. His ^{His Mother.} Mother was called *Beatrice Lopes de Noguera*, ‡ and if we may believe her Son, who omits nothing to make himself esteemed, she was of a *Spanish* Family of Distinction. I would not relate here what he tells us of his Father, if it did not give us to understand how much Vanity and Puerility there was in the Genius of our Atheist. He says that his Father * being near his End, and the Physicians having acquainted him with it, shewed such a Desire for an immortal Life exempt from all Languishing and Slothfulness, that he arose immediately from his Bed, pronouncing these Words of *Vespasian*, *it doth not behove me to die any otherwise than standing*. As if a Saying did not loose of its Elegancy in passing from the Mouth of an Emperor into that of a Steward or Farmer.

His Son, being born, was called LUCILIO, ^{His Christian Name.} but he became too arrogant to be contented with an ordinary Name, and we shall soon see how he was induced to take up another §.

IV. He was a great lover of Learning from his Infancy, and applied himself to it to such

‡ Dial. 424.

* *Amphit. p. 153. Vid. Sueton. in Vespasian. Cap. 24.*

§ *Garase* says, That " the miserable *Lucilio* changed his Name three or four times, according to the Country — " for

such a Degree, that it soon filled him with Presumption. His Father sent him to *Rome*, to study there Philosophy and Divinity: His Master was a certain *Carmelite* Fryer, called

B. Argotti. *Barthelemi Argotti*, who at that time was very famous. VANINI brags of it very much in his Works; he tells us of his Wisdom, and of his sedate Behaviour, and cries him up for a *Phoenix of the Preachers of his time* †. In the

J. Bacon. same manner he mentions another *Carmelite*, called *John Bacon*, an Ornament says he, to the *AVERROIST'S*, formerly my *Præceptor*, and of whom I have learned to swear by none but *AVERROES*. This he tells us in his *Amphitheatre* §; a fine Expression for an Author, who proposes there to refute the antient and modern *Atheists*!

Vanini studies Physic and Astrology.

From *Rome* he returned to *Naples*, according to Mr. *Schramm's* Conjecture **, where he continued his Study of Philosophy. He delighted much in Natural Philosophy, and out of love for that Science, he applied himself some time to *Physick*, which is one of its Branches. Astronomy also imploy'd him considerably, which insensibly flung him into the Whimsies of *Astrologers*. But he bestowed best part of his

“ for being in *Gascony* he called himself *Pompeio*, and among
 “ the Nobility he was known by no other Name. In *Holland*
 “ his Name was *Julius Caesar*: When he was about printing
 “ his Book at *Paris* he stiled himself *Folio Casare Vanino*;
 “ and printing his *Amphitheatrum* at *Lyons*, he added to it
 “ *Taurisano*; and at *Tholose*, when he was tried, he was
 “ called *Sieur Lucilio Garas*. Doct. Cur. p. 1024.

+ Dial. p. 205. *Virum optimum & sapientissimum*.

§ P. 17. *Duce Averroc, in cujus verba jurare eum* Joannes Bacconius, *Averroistarum princeps meritissimus, olim præceptor coegerat*.

** *De vita & Scriptis Julii Cæsaris Vanini*. p. 6.

time

time upon Divinity, such as it was then, and is still now taught in that Country. He doth not seem to be well pleased with it in his Books, and he slips no Opportunity of giving a severe rub to the *Scholasticks*. THOMAS AQUINAS, among others, although very much respected by Men of his Party, seems to him but a weak Reasoner against Impiety. He complains in his Preface to the *Amphitheatre*, that although that Father's Work against the *Pagans* was very learned; yet none of the Objections of the Atheists was there either well stated or confuted *. Nevertheless, he protests, he is of Opinion with Pope John XXII. who in the Consecration of this Saint, pronounced freely; he had done as many Miracles, as he had decided of hard Questions. 'Tis pity that Miracles should have failed him, when he wanted them most, I mean against Atheists: But probably VANINI would give us to understand, that the Miracles of his Church are of no great Efficacy against Libertines.

V. When he had finished his Studies, he got himself received a Priest, and as he had a great deal of Fire he soon came to be a Preacher. I shall not take upon me to tell you, whether his Sermons were excellent or no: But you will judge very advantageously of them, if you take his word for it. They were none of those Monks Sermons, drawn from *Phæbus* and embroidered with continual Miracles, after the manner of the Orators, on the other side of the *Alps*: But they were elaborate Discourses, full of Juice, and nourished in some measure with the Substance of Truth. You may judge of it, by a Fragment, which he gives us in

He is made a Priest. An Idea of his manner of Preaching.

* *Amphitheatr. in prefat.*

his thirtieth Dialogue. He remembers, says he, that preaching one Day upon the Question, *Why God made Men?* he resolved it by the famous Scale of AVERROES, by virtue of which it was necessary there shou'd be a gradation from the lowest of Beings to the most high. *Ut Nempe esset aliquid quod intercessione sua summis ima coaptaret.* Afterwards he himself proposes this Scale according to the AVERROISTS; for it is permitted to every Philosopher to make his own, as to Divines to lay out their common Places.

*Averroes's
Scale.*

1. The first matter according to our *Italian*, is the sole *Power*, the pure *Act*, to wit *God*.

2. Next to *God* are the *Immaterial Substances*.

3. Next to *Matter*, is the *form* of *Corporeity*.

4. Betwixt these two are two *Animal Souls*, the one *Vegetative*, the other *Sensitive*.

5. Above them are the *Understanding*, being less than the *Intelligences*; for existing in *Matter*, it is immaterial and separable from *Matter*; distinct from it by its *Essence*, and confused with it for as much as it informs or instructs it *.

What I observe particular on this Head, is, that some celebrated Divines, among the

* Ipse olim ('tis Vanini speaks) concionando hanc quæstionem resolvit, *Cur homo à Deo fuisset creatus?* Ut nempe aliquid esset, quod intercessione sua summis ima coaptaret,—Materia prima secundum Averroistas, sola parentia, actus purus, solus Deus. Prope Deum *Substantia immortales*. Prope *Materiam forma Corporeitatis*. Inter hæc *anima brutæ dux, Vegetans & Sentiens*; & super has potior *Intellectus*, minor *Intelligentiis*. Etenim in materia existens immaterialis, sed à materia separabilis; separatus per essentiam, non separatus per informationem. *Dial. p. 234.*

Protestants have adopted *Plato's* Scale, after what Mr. *Fontenelle* has said of it, to shew forth its Invalidity. "Some are mightily embarrassed about the infinite Space, which is between *God* and Human Creatures (says that bright Man) and they fill it up with *Genius's* and *Dæmons*; but with what shall be filled up that infinite Space there is between *God* and those *Genius's* and *Dæmons*? For the distance from *God* to any Creature whatever, is infinite. As it is necessary, in a manner of speaking, for *God's* Action to traverse an infinite *Vacuum* to reach those *Dæmons*, it might as well come at once to Men, since they are but a few Degrees distant from them, and there is no proportion at all to the first Distance. When *God* treats with Men by means of Angels, that is not to say, that Angels are necessary for this Communication, as *Plato* pretended; *God* employs them for Reasons, which Philosophy will never be able to discover *". Nevertheless our VANINI would penetrate every thing, and that in his Sermons. AVERROES held there St. PAUL and St. THOMAS's Place. It is true the Hearers did not comprehend much of it; but that was to them a reason for approving his Discourse; for many People readily sacrifice their Reason to the sound of some hard Words and obscure Terms.

VI. Now our VANINI wanted nothing but the Study of the Law, to give his Learning that Air of Universality, which so many Men are fond of. He calls himself *Doctor in utroque Jure*, in the Title Page of his Dialogues, and

He studies the Law and is made Doctor.

* *Fontenelle* Hist. des Oracles. Ch. vi. p. 74.

it appears indeed, that he was not a Novice in the Civil Law, nor even the Canonical.

His stay at Padua, and his laudable Poverty. VII. From *Naples* he went to *Padua*, where the goodness of the Air, the softness of the Climate, and especially the Conversation with Men of Letters, detained him some Years. He there repeated all the Sciences which he had run over, and although extreamly poor, he studied with all the Ardour which a Disposition hot of it Self, and moreover inflamed by a prodigious Ambition, can furnish. *All is warm,* * says he, *to those that love ; have I not sustained at Padua the greatest Frost in Winter with a poor and thin Dress, animated only with a Desire of Learning ?* He says in his *Amphitheatre*, that having finished his Studies in that City, he found himself in a Capacity to go through all Europe, to visit the Universities and assist at the Assemblies and Conferences of the Learned †. He boasts afterwards that he had done it and perfected himself in all kind of Learning.

His Favourite Authors.

VIII. His favourite Authors were ARISTOTLE, AVERROES, CARDAN and POMPONATIUS. Those Names are sufficiently known ; M. Bayle has given us a faithful pourtrait of them in his *Critical Dictionary*, and it may be sufficient here to observe in what Esteem our VANINI held them.

Aristotle.

As to *Aristotle*, that went even to Admiration ; he calls him *the God of Philosophers*, ** *The Dictator of human Wisdom, and the Sovereign Pontiff of the Sages.* He owns that he devoted himself entirely to him, and that he had him continually in his Hands, before his Eyes, and

* Dial, p. 352.

† See the Preface of his *Amphitheatre*.

** De Amirand, Natur. Arcan. Dial. 11.

in his Mind. He borrows from him in several Places, without naming him, and if it was worth while, I could easily make it appear, that he is not the Inventor of all those notable Inquiries into the Mysteries of Nature, which he retails with so much Ostentation, and about which ALEXANDER is introduced admiring him, as if they were all new Discoveries.

The System of AVERROES, which is but a Branch of that of Aristotle, was so much to his liking, that he took care to recommend this Author to his Disciples in their beginning, and even when they had no Tincture of Philosophy at all. He himself acquaints us with this Particularity, in his Dialogues ††. *When the Business was,* says he, speaking of one of his Scholars, *to initiate him in the Mysteries of Philosophy, I took great Care, that he swore to no ones Name; I contented myself with putting into his Hands AVERROES'S Books, which he read with such Greediness, and by which he profited so much, that he soon took upon him to confute the Impertinencies of the Scholasticks, who talk superficially upon Matters.*

POMPONATIUS, a famous AVERROIST, had left behind him at Padua, many Followers and several Writings. Our VANINI read them greedily, and confirmed himself soon in the same Sentiments. Mr. Schramm believes VANINI had studied under Pomponatius at Boulogna *, and that they had seen each other; but he doth not take Notice that Pomponatius was born in 1462, and that Vanani died in 1619, but 34 Years old according to my Calculation. Be that as it will, he calls him always his Divine Master, Divinum

Schramm's
Mistake.

†† Amphib. p. 350.

* Schramm de Vita & Scriptis Vanini. p. 27,

Præptorem, and bestows great Encomiums upon his Works †. The Book where he treats about *Enchantments*, and which was looked upon as a dangerous one, seemed to him a Golden Treatise: *Liber aureus*. Another about *Destiny* charmed him, and a third about Causes and Natural Effects, deserved also his highest Admiration. In short he had hardly any Doubt left, but *the Soul of Averroes had transmigrated into Pomponatius's Body* (*).

Cardanus,
whether
he was a
Fool or an
Atheist?

CARDAN is also one of those Authors, whom VANINI had studied much. He praises him and finds fault with him in several Places. In one place, he gives him the Character of a Man of great Sense, and giving little Credit to Superstition ††. NAUDE doth not agree to the first Article, for he maintains that he was perfectly stupid; which appears sufficiently from his own Writings, when he relates the Transactions of his Life. Mr. Bayle, a Man of a clear Understanding, finds in him rather the Character of a Superstitious Man, than of an Atheist, and he agrees with Naudé, that *Cardan's* chief Character was Folly **, of which, as he pleasantly expresses it, his Understanding could pass for nothing but an Appendix. And truly how can a Man like CARDAN (who out of a stupid Ingenuity owns himself guilty of the most heinous and disagreeable Vices, without excepting even that of Prophanation) pass for one in his Senses with those who have preserved theirs §.

† Divinus Præceptor in Aureo opusculo de incantationibus. Dial. p. 374.

* *Amphit. Dissertat. VI. p. 36.*

†† Dial. p. 203. 204.

** See Dict. Crit. The Article of *Cardan*.

§ Idem ibid.

Another Folly : *Cardan* and *Pomponatius* had both writ upon the *Immortality of the Soul*, and opposed it when they seemed to establish it. *Pomponatius* began it, and made himself many Enemies, by advancing this very delicate Proposition, viz. That since it was impossible to prove it by Natural and Philosophical Reasons, the surest way was to have recourse to Revelation †. *Cardan* maintained the same thing, and copied *Pomponatius*. These two uniform Treatises upon the same Matter, gave them a very bad Repute ; and the truth of the Matter is, that they did not manage their Orthodoxy with any Conduct. They are not contented to attack there the Spirituality and Immortality of our Souls, by the Principles of *Aristotle's* Philosophy ; but also defend Atheists, as being honest Men, whose disinterested Virtue is more Praiseworthy, than that of the most couragious Defenders of the Immortality. Some would have advanced in our times, that *Atheism is not worse than Idolatry* ; I do not know if they have not stopped there, because they dared not go any farther. *CARDAN* being bolder, made the Scales to turn in Favour of Atheism ; the Passage is so remarkable, that I cannot help translating it here, so much the rather because Mr. Bayle has not quoted it, to my Knowledge, in the *Continuation of his Various Thoughts upon Comets*. “ Let us now see **, says he, whether the Belief of Immortality makes Men more virtuous and happy. As for my part, “ I do not perceive it contributes any thing “ towards it. We see in *Cicero* and *Diogenes Laertius*, that the *Epicureans* were more up-

Cardan
and *Pompo-
natius* have
both writ
on the Im-
mortality
of the Soul.

† See *Dict. Histor. & Critic.* The Article of *Pomponatius*.

** *Cardanus De immortal. anim. Cap. 2. fol. 33.*

“ right

“ right and honest, and had more true Good-
 “ nefs towards Men, than the *Stoicks* or *Pla-*
 “ *tonicks*. The Reason is, if I mistake not,
 “ what *Galen* advances, that *Men* grow good or
 “ bad by *Custom* ††. But no Body trusts them
 “ who make no Profession of an unshaken Up-
 “ righteousness; and therefore they are obliged
 “ to observe more their Honour than others,
 “ and to prove themselves such to the Publick,
 “ for fear Men should think their Practices
 “ are according to their Sentiments. Hence it
 “ is that few Men now a-Days equal the Faith
 “ of *Usurers*; which otherwise lead a very
 “ bad Life. Let it be observed also, that the
 “ Sect of *Pharisees*, who believed in the Re-
 “ surrection and Immortality of the Soul, never
 “ ceased prosecuting *Jesus Christ*; and that the
 “ *Saducees*, another Sect, which rejected both
 “ these Articles, attacked him but very seldom,
 “ once or twice at most, and in such a Manner
 “ that it caused him no great Uneasiness. A-
 “ gain, if you compare the Lives of *Pliny* and
 “ *Seneca*, their Lives I say, and not their Words,
 “ you will find that *Pliny* with his Belief of
 “ the Mortality of the Soul, surpasses *Seneca*
 “ in his moral Behaviour as much, as he *Pliny*
 “ in his Discourse upon Religion and Virtue.
 “ The *Epicureans* cultivated Honesty, they en-
 “ tertained very officiously the Children of their
 “ Pupils, and maintained at their Charges the
 “ Families of their deceased Friends. They
 “ were looked upon every where as honest
 “ Men, altho they did not regard much the
 “ Worship of the Gods, and denied their Ex-

†† That contradicts his Principle, proving the Inequality
 of the Sects.

“istence very strongly*. It happens also from
 “that flattering Opinion of another Life, that
 “the *Wicked* have room to exert their Passions ;
 “the *Good* suffer many things contrary to the
 “Welfare of Society ; and the Laws sustain
 “a considerable Shock, in as much, as upon
 “Consideration of Religion, they are softened
 “to such a Degree that often the very Foundation
 “of the Publick Good, and the Ease of Man-
 “kind lies at Stake. Neither doth it seem to
 “me, that this Belief of Immortality, makes
 “Men more couragious. For *Brutus* was no
 “more so than *Cassius* ; and if we will say the
 “Truth, the Actions of *Brutus* were rather
 “more cruel than those of *Cassius*. For the last
 “treated the *Rhodians*, altho’ great Enemies of the
 “righteous Cause, in a more favourable man-
 “ner, than *Brutus* had done the Cities where
 “he commanded, and which were in Alliance
 “with him. And lastly, what shall we say ?
 “Is it not *Brutus*, the same *Brutus* the Stoick,
 “who delivered the Republick into *Anthony*’s
 “Hands, because he had saved it to no pur-
 “pose, altho’ according to Law ; after *Cassius*
 “had rescued it by his good Conduct”. I have
 copied the whole Passage for several Reasons.
 First, to make *Cardan*’s Character known, and
 the Value one ought to put upon his Writings,
 and especially upon that about the Immortality
 of the Soul. Secondly, to expose *Vanini*’s Cha-
 racter at the same time, who retails those very
 Thoughts in his *Dialogues*, and no Doubt ap-
 proves them†. Thirdly, to make it appear that
 the *Paradoxes* which have been lately vented a-

* They did not deny it absolutely, but only stammered upon this Article. *Epicurum Balbutientem. De natura Deorum.*

† Dial. p. 328.

broad, and the *Examples* alledged to that Purpose, are not so new as some may imagine. And lastly, to have an Opportunity of shewing our Acknowledgment to Mr. Bayle, for that being supported by many Reasons, furnished him by *Cardan*, he yet was honest enough to keep an even Balance between *Religion* and *Atheism*; maintaining against the *Italian* Philosopher, that it was not true that Religion had done more harm than good in the World, as he expresses himself in *Section 131*, of his *various Thoughts*, &c. He believes even that Religion inspires more Courage than Atheism; for says he in the same Place, *With Cardan's Leave: A Society of Atheists, as being incapable of administering to each other Motives of Religion to make them courageous, cou'd easier be dispersed than a Society of Men that worship some Deity.* Behold here two famous Authors in a Contradiction about the Power of the Influence of Atheism! This is not a proper Place to examine these Sentiments; let it suffice that we have justified in Part the Judgment of Mr. Naudé upon *Cardan's* Philosophy, one of the great Masters of our *Vanini*. *Pomponatius* had already treated upon the same Topick. I shall quote here some Pieces out of his Book of *the Immortality of the Soul*, by which you may judge of the rest *. He is very well persuaded that the Doctrine of the Immortality of the Spirits, doth not dispose Men to be wicked, and that since they naturally love Felicity and hate Misery; to make them honest it suffices to shew them, *that the Happiness of Life consists in the Practice of Virtue, and Misery in the Practice of Vice.* He adds, *that those who inculcate Mortality of the Soul, open a Way to the most per-*

* See Dict. Hist. Crit. Article, *Pomponatius*.

fect Virtue, which is that which hath not in View any Recompense or Chastisement. He also says, that those Men are brutal, to whom the Immortality of the Soul must be proposed as a Bribe : And that probably there are some Authors who have taught that Doctrine, without believing it themselves, and used that Stratagem to restrain the sensual Inclinations of brutal Minds *. All those Remarks, adds Mr. Bayle, do not remove the Difficulty. But here is a more reasonable Thought, founded upon Facts. He says, that a great Number of wicked People believe the Immortality of the Soul, and that many Saints and just Men do not believe it. Here is the whole Passage which Mr. Bayle has not translated. “ And it is not generally true that they
 “ are debauched People, who establish the Mor-
 “ tality of the Soul ; neither is it true, they are
 “ all wise Men who believe the Immortality : For
 “ it is evident that abundance of ill Livers have
 “ Faith, but are led astray by their Passions ;
 “ and on the contrary we know for certain, that
 “ a great Number of wise and just Men held
 “ the Mortality of the Soul. Plato tells us in
 “ the first Book of his *Republick*, that the Poet
 “ *Simonides*, an excellent and divine Man in all
 “ Respects, was of that Number. *Homer*,
 “ according to *Aristotle’s* Observation in his
 “ Treatise upon the Soul Ch. 2. made no Distin-
 “ ction betwixt Sense and Understanding : And
 “ who is ignorant of *Homer’s* Merit ? *Hippo-*
 “ *crates* and *Galen*, Persons whose Probity was
 “ no ways inferior to their Knowledge, were
 “ of the same Opinion. *Alexander Aphrodiseus*,
 “ the great *Alfarabus*, *Abubacer*, *Avempacius*,

* These are Mr. Bayle’s Words, Dict. Hist. & Crit. Art. *Pomponatius*.

“and among the rest *Plinius* and *Seneca*, and “many others, are not far from this Sentiment”. *Seneca* in his 54th Epistle, *Lib. VII.* says in plain Terms, that the Soul is mortal. And he expresses himself yet clearer in his Epistle to *Marcia*, where he specifies the Names of a great Number of other learned Men, who believed the same †.

Mr. Bayle
has a better
Opinion of
them than
of *Vanini*.

Here it appears, how *Cardan* and Mr. *Bayle* do not agree about the influence of Atheism: Besides, *Pomponatius* does not hold the same with *Cardan* concerning *Seneca*. *Cardan*, makes him a *Stoick* and a good Orator, but not a very honest Man: *Pomponatius* makes an *Epicurean* of him, in point of the Mortality of the Soul, and yet a very good Man. However those three Authors, *Cardan*, *Pomponatius* and *Bayle*, agree in this Point; that *Atheism* does not make Men worse than they would be otherways. Now that *Cardan* and *Pomponatius* were professed Infidels, notwithstanding their preliminary Protestations in those two Treatises, is strenuously denied by *Bayle*; and indeed natural Equity demands that we should suspend our Judgment upon Circumstances only, unless by manifest Prophanations Authors pull off the Mask, as VANINI and others have done. VANINI is not so equitable as *Bayle*, towards the two *Italians* just now mentioned. *Pomponatius* and *Cardan**, says he, were Men full of Knowledge and Learning. They were so little distant from my Sentiments, that each of them has given us a Treatise on the Immortality of the Soul. I own ingenuously; I don't know as yet their Sentiments upon that Head and the manner in which they have expressed themselves, for those two Books

† *Pomponat. De immortalitate anime*, p. 112.

* *Amphit. Dissertat.* 28.

are not yet come to my Hands, nor have they appeared at the Fairs of Franckfort, or in the Shops of our Lutheran and Calvinist Booksellers. After all, I do not know, if they have not done as Agrippa, who has composed so many Books about the evocation and conjuration of Dæmons, although that arch Knave * believed nothing of it, after the Example of all those Necromancers, who impose on the Vulgar. See the first Book *De vanitate Scientiarum*, and the beginning of every Volume, where Agrippa openly denies the Existence of Dæmons.

Thus our Atheist furnishes us designedly with a Key to his pernicious Works. That Method of attacking, when one seems to defend, is not new. Carneades used it sometimes: Cicero did as much in his philosophical Books; Agrippa has imitated them; Cardan and Pomponatius are come since; and our VANINI has taken a model from them in his Dissertations and Dialogues. By the privilege of History, I should name here him, who with a greater Talent and more light than those *Italians*, has built upon all the others; but as he is one of your Heroes, and the Opinions of Men are divided into the different Views they have assigned him; you would perhaps never forgive me, if I put his Name in the List with Cardan, Pomponatius, &c.

IX. VANINI having finish'd his Studies, re-
turned into his native Country, viz. to *Tau-rosano*, probably to regulate his Affairs, and to put himself in a situation of commencing his Mission. To that end, after he had done

Vanini undertakes an Apostleship

* See Bayle's Dict. Hist. Crit. Article *Agrippa Melanch-ton* in his Letter to Count *d'Erbach* calls him Sorcerer. Ep. lin. S. p. 11.

his Business, he returned to *Naples*, and 'twas there, as it is supposed, he formed the strange Design of going with thirteen of his Companions to spread in the World his Atheism. Some pretend even, he own'd this at *Thoulouse* before the Parliament. *P. Marsenne* relates it in his *Commentary upon Genesis*, where he refutes *Vanini's* Impieties. "Before he was
 "executed at *Thoulouse*, he confessed before
 "the whole Assembly of the Parliament, that
 "at *Naples*, he and thirteen others, had resolved to go through the whole World, to
 "sow the Doctrine of Atheism, and that
 "*France*, had fell to his Lot. An impious
 "Apostleship, adds *Marsenne*, which he executed but too well at *Paris* and in other
 "Places. *

I quote this Circumstance, because it comes from a grave Author; but I do not think it probable for two Reasons. First, supposing the Fact to be true, that *Vanini*, to turn the Gospel into ridicule, had affected an Apostleship of that Nature, I cannot think he would have own'd it in an absolute Court of Justice, which could aggravate his Punishment; unless one supposes, it was but a few Minutes before Execution, when he saw there was no hopes left for him. But Father *Marsenne* adds, he made that Confession publicly before all the Judges. Was all the Parliament in a Body to accompany him to the place of Execution? That is not likely at all. The other Reason is, that *Gramond*, who was upon the Place, and besides, first President of the Parliament, says nothing of it; nevertheless, the thing was re-

* *Marsenne*. Comment. in Genes. p. 671, 672.

markable enough to be remembered, and of too great Importance to be forgot, upon account of that impious Man, and of whose Death he relates the most minute Circumstances. If this negative Argument doth not persuade all the Readers, we must own at least that as VANINI gave a full Account of himself, before he died, *Gramond* was in the wrong to suppress this particular.

However it be, the Distribution of these new Apostles being settled, and *France* being appointed to our *Vanini*, he from that time quitted the name of *Lucilio*, and assumed that of *Julius Caesar*. He thought perhaps, to make as considerable spiritual Conquests among the *Gauls*, as *Julius Caesar* had made temporal ones. But he was disappointed; for he did not return to *Naples* with his Friends in Triumph, nor did he die so nobly as the *Roman* Dictator.

X. Here we shall follow him in all his Courses, according to the Method traced by Mr. *Schramm*. You'll see the Marches and Countermarches of our turbulent Apostle. He crossed first through a part of *Germany*, and advanced as far as *Bohemia*, where he had some discourse with a *Memnonite*, and maintained obstinately, that the Christians disputed among themselves about Trifles, and that all those who received the Creed of the Apostles with those of *Nice*, of *Constantinople* and *St. Athanasius*, had no reason to excommunicate and condemn each other. Our *Italian* being satisfied to have railed at the Christians about their Doctrine and Schisms, makes an Anabaptist answer coolly according to his Custom, *that the Roman Catholics * differ as much from the Hereticks, as Truth from Falshood.*

His feint
or true
Voyages.

Vanini's
Objection
against
Schisms.

* Dial. p. 349.

Having travelled all over *Germany*, he had a mind to see the *Low-Countries*, and he stopped at *Amsterdam*, where he had several Disputes with an Atheist, whose Impieties he observes. But they are rather, as I think, his own Thoughts, which he only puts into the Mouth of another, to have the malicious Pleasure of refuting them ill; as we shall see by what follows.

When he had seen all *Holland*, and the principal Cities of *Brabant*, which he accuses of being full of Infidels, he came to *Geneva*, where he he had also, says he, a long Dispute with a Dutch Atheist, whose Blasphemies and Filth, he confuted with a great deal of Force and Courage, even to the hazard of his Life *. As if there were any danger in a Protestant City, to launch out vigorously against Libertines, for one who is a Papist? That may do well enough in *Italy* or *Spain*, or among some of the Peasants, to whom *Geneva* is represented as a safe Retreat of Jews and Atheists. But such is the Character of *Vanini*: You must not rely too much upon what he says, for according to *Boileau's* Epigram, † his Words are frivolous, and his Discourses no Articles of Faith.

XI. Since we mention *Geneva*, you cannot imagine, Sir, how much the Southern Nations are prejudiced against that City. I remember, that being lodg'd in *Spain*, at a Priest's House, in the Kingdom of *Valencia*, the Governour of the City, where I then was, being sick, sent to all the Houses in the Town to get some Fowls for his Money. They refused him very rudely. He being piqued at this Refusal, which

* Dial. p. 328.

† *Boileau* Epigr. contre un Athée. Oeuvr. de *Boileau* Tom. 1.

was at an unseasonable Time, because the City, which had surrender'd itself, had been rebellious to *Philip V.* he reveng'd himself with a great deal of Mildness: He commanded a Sergeant and two Soldiers, to go into all the Court-yards, and to take by force, and without paying, what had been refused him for a just Price. The Sergeant and Soldiers, began with the Priests, as being best stock'd, and came to our House. My Landlord, a venerable old Man, but very brisk, contested some time, but submitted at last, being overcome by his Nephew's and House-keeper's Intreaties; but not without a great deal of Passion. In short, he could not contain himself any longer, when he saw that the Soldiers, shewing him his Fowls, laugh'd in his Face. *Is that, says he, the Law of God? It is the Devil's Law! In Geneva itself there is nothing done like it. Eslo es Ley de Dios? Es Ley de todos los Diablos! In Genievra no se haze tal Cosa!*

XII. *Vanini* finding himself no longer secure at *Geneva*, because he perhaps acted there the Libertine, went to *Lyons*, and took upon him also to hold forth there under Pretext of teaching Philosophy. But they discovered the Venom, and he was obliged to flee, to escape being burnt. The Plan of his Apostleship was thus often interrupted. He came to *England*, and made Acquaintance at *London*, with one *Moravi*, Chaplain to the Envoy of *Venice*, and by his Assiduity to the Catholick Faith, he drew upon him, says he, the Persecution of the Protestants. He was put in Prison, where he remained forty nine Days, well prepared to receive the Crown of Martyrdom, which he wished for, says he, with all the Ardour imaginable. This happened in

1614,

1614, and is the second *Date* we have found in his Life. †

He is suspected in Italy, and goes to France again.

XIII. But such a Martyrdom did not agree with an Atheist. They let him out of Prison, he cross'd the Sea, and took the Road for *Italy* again. Another Disappointment in his Views: *Genoa* seem'd very proper for him to raise himself Disciples. He therefore undertook to teach Youth, receiving Scholars of all Degrees: Unhappily for him they had no great regard there for *Averroes*. They look'd upon him as an *Arabian* Philosopher, * a profess'd Enemy of the *Immortality* of the Soul; he wrote against the *Christian* Religion, which he look'd upon as false, by reason of the pretended Mystery of the Eucharist; the *Jewish* he called childish, for the many Rites and Ceremonies; And lastly, the *Mahometan*, he stiles a hoggish Religion, because of the carnal Enjoyment which it permits and authorizes. Our *Vanini* nevertheless, was a perfect *Averroist*, as we have observ'd already. He commenced his first Lectures with the Principles of that Philosopher; an unhappy Obstinacy, which accompany'd him every where, and always drew upon him the same Suspicion and Danger! Some complained of it, he was afraid, and returned to *Lyons*, where he endeavoured to screen himself from the Persecution of the Clergy, by a Book against *Cardan*, and other *Atheists*, wherein, under pretence of combating them with all his Might, he gives 'em, in some measure, the Victory, by the weakness of his Answers. We

† *Amphit.* p. 118. *Such is the Hypocrisy which reigns from one End to the other of his Amphitheatre.*

* See *Bayle's* and *Mereri's* Dictionaries. Article *Averroes*.

shall speak presently of his *Amphitheatre*, when we have conducted our Atheist to the End of his Course.

XIV. But not trusting too much to his Books, ^{He is made a Frier, and} in which the Venom is wrap'd up so carelessly, ^{turn'd out of the Con-} that it could not escape the Observation of ^{vent for} Men of Understanding, he went to *Italy* again, ^{some hei-} where having been accused of reassuming his ^{nous} former Impieties, he return'd into *France*, and ^{Crime,} took Orders upon him in *Guienne*, but it is not known in what Convent. The *Patiniana* tells us this Particularity †. F. *Merfenne*, who confirms it, adds another, which, if it is true, is a great Reproach to the Life of our Atheist, viz. That he was turn'd out of the Convent for his disorderly Behaviour; and among the rest, for a Crime deserving of Fire and Faggot, which good Manners forbid to name, and the *Minime* dares not to express himself but in *Greek*. I shall endeavour to translate the whole Passage. " In that manner, says the Fryer, speaking against " Infidels, 'tis one hears Atheists talk: *We are* " *honest Men, we do nothing against our Consci-* " *ence, we would rather die than forswear our* " *selves, or wrong any body.* But with their leave, " they don't say true. There is not a worse " Man than an Atheist: And I prove it even by " the Example of *Vanini*, the *Cæsar* of the In- " fidels, who having taken upon him the *Ha-* " *bit*, and not being willing to dishonour him- " self by the Love of Women, thought to put " himself out of the reach of Infamy, by giv- " ing into the Excess which is attributed to his " Country; which being known in the Convent " where he was, they turn'd him out as a vile " Monster*.

† *Patiniana*. p. 119.

* *Merfen*. Comment. in *Genes*. p. 671.

XV. Being banish'd from the Convent he retired to *Paris*: And as he always persisted in his Views, he neglected no Opportunity to insinuate his Paradoxes. He endeavoured to introduce himself to the Pope's Nuncio, which was at that time *Roberto Ubaldini*, Bishop of *Politio*. To make his Court to him, and all the Clergy in general, he undertook to write *An Apology of the Council of Trent*: The Nuncio gave him the Liberty of his Library, and free Power to consult what Books he thought proper. This Circumstance he tells us himself in his Works, that you may not be shock'd to see so many antient and modern Atheists alledged and refused there; a Liberty which, every one knows, is not allowed to Priests. *Patin* tells us, that he affected to be Learned, but was not: But he speaks only from Tradition. *F. Merfenne*, who was better informed about it, tells us, in the Place of his Commentary, quoted above *, that he did not acquit himself ill of the Functions of his impious *Apostleship*. He perverted a great many young People, he gained some Physicians, and had access to the *Marshall de Bassompierre*, who was not otherwise overburthen'd with Religion. I don't doubt but he was, at that time, known to *F. Garasse*, a Jesuit, who styles him the *Grand Patriarch of Atheists*, and relates some of his Conversations in his *Doctrine curieuse*. You may judge, Sir, of our *Vanini's* Conversations, and of his Policy, by the Sample *Garasse* gives us of it, and which I shall relate in his own Words, because I know you love the old Style, and that you find in it some Graces, and a *keenness* which is wanting in

* See above. p. 9.

ours. "As to Men (*Vanini* speaks) they should do,
 "as the Rangers, or Keepers do yearly in
 "great Forests; they go to examine, and to
 "find out the withered Trees, and to clear
 "the Forest, cut down what is useless, and
 "superfluous or hurtful; keeping only the good
 "Trees, and the young Branches of Hope.
 "In like manner, said that wicked Atheist,
 "every Year should be held a rigorous Visitation,
 "of all the Inhabitants, in the great and
 "populous Cities; and every thing useless,
 "and what hinders the rest from living should
 "be put to Death. As for Example, those
 "that follow no Business beneficial to the Publick,
 "decrepid old Persons, all Vagabonds
 "and idle People: Nature should be lopp'd,
 "the Cities clear'd, and every Year at least a
 "Million should be killed; who are like wild
 "Brambles, or Nettles, and hinder others
 "from growing". * Those are the Fruits of
Cardan's and *Averroes's* School.

XVI. He had his *Dialogue about Nature* printed in 1616, which he dedicated to the *Marshall de Bassompierre*, whose Almoner he was, says *M. Patin*, with a Salary of 200 Crowns a Year; † but probably he had this Place not till after this Dedication. For all that he was not contented with this Place, which obliged him to be regular; he loved better to ramble about, and to make Converts; and in this manner he lost himself.

He prints his Dialogues.

XVII. His Books were every Day more known, and more suspected. His *Amphitheatre* had begun to draw in some Minds, by the

The Book made him suspicious to the Clergy.

* *Doctrine curieuse.* p. 815.

† In the Collection of *M. Patin's* MSS. quoted in *Apologia pro Julio Cæsare Vanini.* The Apologist ridicules the MS.

The Sorbonne condemns his Books to be burnt.

new Ideas and Paradoxes, which he substituted to the antient Tenets of common and scholastick Divinity. But his Dialogues, much more impious, had defamed him to such a degree among the *Roman* Clergy, (a Body of Men, naturally very jealous and mistrustful; and still much more so in proportion to their Ignorance,* and the Character of the Errors whose Contagion they dread) so that they waited but for a plausible Opportunity to accuse and cut him off. They cou'd not condemn him upon his Books; for they were printed with Authority, approved by some *Doctors*, and he himself submitted all his Writings to the Authority of the Holy See †; an excellent way to get clear of Embroils, by means of Recantation! However it be, the Venom was perceivable. Religion was there with Neck and Heels tied together, delivered up to the Hands of the Profane and Atheists. The *Sorbonne*, of which two *Doctors* had approved his strange *Dialogues*, recalled that Book to a new Examination, and condemn'd it to be burnt by the Common Hangman. *Roset* I think is the only one who tells us this Circumstance,** but it is too probable to be omitted. We are told of another in the *Patiniana* *†, which is, that *Vanini* seeing himself forsaken by all the World,

* This Word is only applied to the Times when Ignorance reigned.

† This he doth in the *Amphitheatre*, at the End of the first Dissertation, and in the last of his Dialogues. p. 495.

** In his tragical History, where he adds also this; he caused to revive the wicked and abominable Book, called *The Three Impostors*, which is printed publicly, and to the great Scandal of the Christians. He compos'd a Book about natural Causes, and dedicated it to M. *Bassompierre*. He ascribed to Nature, what belong'd properly to the Creator of the Universe. The *Sorbonne* condemn'd this Book to the Flames.

*† P. 52.

hated by the People, shunned by honest Men, persecuted by the Clergy, and what touched him nearest of all, under a continual Poverty; he launch'd out into the first Action of Despair, which cou'd not but prove fatal to him. He wrote to the Pope, that *if they did not soon give him some Benefice, he was going to turn the whole Christian Religion topsy-turvy, in three months time.* Patin, who is made to say this, adds, that he knew a Man of Honour, who had seen that Letter, in which were many other Absurdities, and even very shocking Things. I am apt to believe, that Vanini had couched this Letter upon Paper, to disperse his Spleen, and to divert himself about it with his Friends, but there is no likelihood of his having sent it to Rome. Princes have long Arms, and the Popes yet longer than other Princes. Vanini was not yet so disordered in his Mind, as to insult in so daring a manner, the Lieutenant of God upon Earth; he had too much respect and veneration for the Church. *I would rather, says he, somewhere *, draw upon me the anger of Horace, than that of our Inquisitors, whom I respect and venerate as the Guardians of the Lord's Vineyard.*

XVIII. This is certain, that he left Paris in 1617, and returned to Toulouse. He did there what he had done every where else, without change of Method or Principles. He professed there *Physick, Philosophy and Divinity*, and took Scholars of all Sorts. Gramond says, he kept in close Quarters for some time. He had Art enough to introduce himself to the first President, who charged him to instruct his Children: In which he succeeded too well to his Misfortune; for if we may be-

He left Paris and came back to Toulouse.

* Amplit. p. 109.

lieve those who told it to *M. Leibnitz* *, the Attorney General animated the People against this miserable Wretch, and prosecuted him with the utmost Rigour, on purpose to vex the President, who began to love him.

The Cause of his death according to *Leibnitz*.

XIX. There was a great deal of Imprudence in *Vanini*'s Conduct. At the time when he is lifted up from the Dirt and the Oppression of the Clergy, and that he sees himself upon the brink of Preferment, he endeavours secretly to teach and insinuate Atheism. He instructed the Children in the fear of *God*, and those who were Men grown, in Irreligion. Those are commonly the Marches and Countermarches of wicked Spirits, and one of those Contradictions, which it would be difficult to comprehend, and even believe, if we did not know, that there are still extant such profess'd Infidels, who after they have instructed their Children in the principles of Christianity, to bring them up to Virtue and Modesty, go afterwards with their Friends to the Tavern, and ridicule the same religious Precepts, which they have taught their Family.

Grammond and *Borrichius*'s Testimony.

XX. *Grammond*, who was since first President at *Toulouse*, reports in his History, that our Infidel did not cease venting his Doctrine, and to spread abroad his Impieties. But he did yet more, says *Borrichius* in the Journal of his Travels †. He was told at *Toulouse* that *Vanini* had been burnt, because he had established there, some small Assemblies, about ten of the Clock in the Evening, frequented by some of the Chiefs of the City, to whom he

* Essays of *Theadice*, towards the End. See the Index at the Word *Vanini*.

† Apolog. pro *Vanino*, p. 39.

delivered his libertine Principles. 'Tis likely *Borrichius* means young Men, for it is not to be supposed that Fathers of Families went there. They would not have suffered, in their City, such a dangerous Person, although they had been of his Opinion themselves. Mr. *Bayle*, who was so curious, and had lived at *Toulouse* eighteen Months, tells us nothing of these Circumstances of *Vanini's* Life, it seems rather he did not know them, or doubted of those he found in *Borrichius's* Writings. Perhaps we may learn something about it in his Supplement, which is now in Hand; for I have been assured there is an Article about VANINI in it. If the Gentlemen of *Toulouse*, who in the Records of their Parliament, possess all the Memoirs of this Process, unless they burnt 'em with the Criminal, would favour the Publick with 'em, they might do it very easily, by sending a Copy thereof to some noted Man, whom the love for Sciences and Literature, renders every Day dearer to the learned, I mean, the Abbé *Bignon*, who would not fail to impart it to the Publick, in that valuable Journal, which is formed under his Direction: By that means we might be assured of Facts, which we cannot now be positive in. I know very well that we have *Grammond*, who was upon the Place, and that he is particular as to the chief Circumstances; but there is a great deal of difference between the report of an Historian, who is very bigotted*, and the authentick Pieces of a Court of Judicature. Mean while, until those Gentlemen satisfy us, or some other curious Person of *Toulouse*, doth acquaint us with some more considerable Particularities, (as it is easy yet

* See *Patin's* Letters. Letter 91.

to come to the knowledge of them) you must content yourself, Sir, with those I have collected. But before we come to the Death of our Infidel, I shall give you an Account of the Impieties which so visibly brought it upon him: And that I can do no better than by an Abstract of his Works, since it is always true, that Authors draw their Pourtraits in their Books, without thinking on it.

Vanini's
Works.

Commen-
tarii Physi-
ci.

Commen-
tarii Medici.

XXI. There is room to believe that all his Works have not been published. He tells us himself, that his first Essays did not please him afterwards. They are Commentaries upon Natural Philosophy †, where he refuted *Cardan* in many Places. You may judge of their Merit, from this Paradox which he taught there, viz. that *the Taste is not one of the five Senses*.

He composed afterwards Cominentaries upon Physick, *Commentarii Medici*, which he esteemed but little, as being made in haste. He treated there of the Distempers of the Eyes and their Remedies * &c.

Afterwards he worked upon *Morality*, and wrote a Treatise about true Wisdom, *De vera Sapientia* §. *Garasse* had read that Book *, as it appears from his *Doctrine Curieuse*. The choice

† See *Schramm De Vita & Scriptis Vanini*, p. 80.

* See the same. *Ibid.* and *Vanini's Dialog.* p. 88 and 166.

§ See the same. *Ibid.* and *Vanini's Dialog.* p. 275.

* I quote this Fact upon the good faith of *Vanini's Apologift. Apologia pro Vanino*, p. 6. I have consulted *Garasse* since, who says, he has read that Book, p. 1015. *Doctrine Curieuse*. I have seen, says he, but three of *Vanini's* Books, viz. his *Amphitheatrum*, that *De sapientia*, and his *Dialogues*. In his *Amphitheatre* he speaks like an Hypocrite; in his Book *de Sapientia* like a Cynick, and in his *Dialogues* like a compleat Atheist.

of such a Subject may seem perhaps strange in *Vanini's* Hands; but it is not uncommon for the greatest Fools to write about true Wisdom. *Garasse* says, that Book is writ, as if it were done by a *Heathen* or *Cynick Philosopher*.

Natural Magick was not out of the reach of his Enquiries. He composed a *Treatise*, entituled; *Physico-magicus tractatus* *, where among other Paradoxes, he maintained that Bastards have more Sense, more Beauty, and more Strength than legitimate Children. He was so possessed of that Prejudice, that he repeats it in his *Dialogues*, and makes no scruple to wish himself a Bastard, whose turpitude is so amply recompenced by the Advantages of the ordinary Effects. “ Why do you smile? says *Alexander*, because I thought says *Julius*, on a pleasant Speculation I had just now. Pray, answers *Alexander*, impart it to me, if it was but for to laugh. *Julius Caesar* answers †, “ Would to God, I had been born from the left side, and out of Wedlock! My Parents “ would have worked to frame me with so “ much Vigour — that I should have had “ an extraordinary Beauty, a robust Body and “ a clear Head: But because I am a legitimate Child, I want all those Advantages: “ My Father was bent under the burden of “ Years when he married, and all his Vigour “ of Youth was cooled. His Strength was “ slackned, his Spirits very weak, and his natural Faculties very much impaired; he was “ seventy Years old, that is all you can say, “ and consequently — from thence it is I “ have obtained a feeble Complexion. And

* Dial p. 252.

† Dial. p. 321. 322.

“ if you see me of an aspiring Genius, a
 “ gentle Deportment, and a Body subject to
 “ Infirmities, 'tis because my Father, although
 “ old, was agreeable, of an easy Temper, and
 “ that a young Woman (Philosophers laugh at
 “ those Christian Marriages) took care to
 “ warm him again. Moreover, he waited for
 “ that fine Season, when Nature is renewed,
 “ and by the help of *Bacchus* he found himself
 “ yet — *Alexander*. By all that is good,
 “ those are not the Speculations of a drunken
 “ Man! Those are Meditations of a Man
 “ profoundly Wise.

*Begging Pardon of the Publick for the Liberty
 I have taken in translating this Passage, as mo-
 destly as possible, I protest my only View in so
 doing was, to make Vanini's Character the better
 known.*

This ambitious Man ventured also upon a
 Treatise, that Glory ought to be held in Con-
 tempt, *De contemnenda Gloria*, where he pro-
 posed to refute all the Atheists of his Time,
 who accused our Saviour of having aimed at
 Glory, even to his Death: As if there were
 great need to overthrow this Illusion for those
 who read the Gospel, and know that *Jesus
 Christ* always appealed to his Resurrection,
 which if it had not happened, would not have
 failed staining his Name with perpetual Con-
 tempt.

But this Atheistical Objection pleased *Va-
 nini* enough to repeat it often, and to form
 his own from it, as we shall see in the following.

It is probably that with the same impious
 View he composed an Apology for Religion;
 which he entituled, *Defence of the Law of Mo-
 ses and that of Christ against the Physicians, Astro-
 nomers*

Apologia
 pro lege Mo-
 saica &
 Christiana.

nomers and Politicians *. He there refuted the Atheists of his Times, who advanced that *Moses* made the Children of *Israel* pass through the red Sea at the time of reflux or low Water: He also treated there at large upon the Tenets of the Christian Religion, and in particular on the Immortality of the Soul, which *Cærdan* and *Pomponatius* had attack'd, and he made it appear after his manner, that the Opinion of the latter is of dangerous Consequence. All this without doubt to have an Opportunity of saying against the Christian Religion, what he pleased. 'Tis certain he had a good Opinion of Astrology, and that consequently he was something of an Astronomer. He took upon him to publish *A Treatise of Astronomy*, which was printed in Germany. *Alexander* his admirer acquaints us with that particularity in his Dialogues. I have read, says he †, *these Easter Holy-Days, your Books of Astronomy, printed at Strasbourg, with a very fine Letter: You teach there some things concerning the Stars, which seem to me admirable and divine.* This Book must be very scarce, since *M. de La Croze*, whom every body knows to be well versed in the History of Literature, without mentioning here his other Accomplishments, for all the Enquiry he made could not light on it: He not only did not find the Book, but also owns, that he no where has seen mention made of it *.

To appease the Clergy, *Vanini* compos'd also *An Apologia* *pro Concilio Tridentino*, divided into eighteen Books, and directed against the Protestants †. *Mr. Schramm* thinks he was not

* Amphitheatr. p. 38.

† Dial. p. 31.

* *Entretien sur div. suj. d'Hist. &c.* p. 353.

† See the Preface of the Amphitheatre.

sparing there of Investives against *Luther*, and I believe *Calvin* met with no better Treatment. It is a common Stratagem with Infidels, to skreen themselves from the secular Power under the mask of Orthodoxy, and to lay hold of the Body of the Tree, at the time when they dig the Ground to root it out. No Persons in these latter Times have seem'd to be more interested for the Doctrine of *Grace*, than those who derided it most in their Hearts. This Stratagem, notwithstanding it is very gross, did not fail of Success. They are applauded in Conversation and all Conferences, and through a secret Jealousy, others, who counterbalance their Merit, are denied the just Encomiums of their Ability and Zeal. What is practised in our Days did also happen in *Vanini's* Time. Clear-sighted Persons, discovered immediately in his Books, the Venom which seized the Reader at the first Approach, and complained of it. But *Vanini* defended himself, and protested he was zealously affected to the *Roman* Religion, he wrote of true Wisdom, of Contempt of Glory; of the Truth and the light of the Council of *Trent*, he ranged himself under the formidable Canons of that Council, as some have skreened themselves since behind other Canons; he frowned at Innovators, and maintained the Interest of the Church with a dazzling Zeal. Thus he escaped the Censure, because he assumed an Air of Orthodoxy, which satisfied some weak Minds. He found some Doctors of the *Sorbonne*, who approved his Works which were visibly impious.

All these Works of *Vanini*, whether they were published or not, are lost; we know the Titles and Subject of them, because he acquaints us with it himself in the two Books which are not per-
rish'd,

rish'd, viz. his *Amphitheatre* and *Dialogues*, of which I am going to give you an Account with all the Fidelity you require of me.

XXII. The *Amphitheatre's* Title is, *Amphitheatrum aeternae providentiae Divino-Magicum, Christiano-Physicum, Astrologico-Catholicum, adversus veteres Philosophos, Atheos, Epicureos, Peripateticos, Stoicos, &c.* That is, *An Amphitheatre of Divine Providence, Divino-Magicum, Christiano-Physicum, Astrologico-Catholicum, against the antient Philosophers, Atheists, Epicureans, Peripateticks, Stoicks, &c.* in 8vo. printed at Lyons, 1615, dedicated to Count de Castro, Protector of his Family and his Benefactor. It is approved by four Doctors, viz. by Claude Deville, François de Soleil, Jaques Deveine & Seve, who acknowledge to have found there nothing against the Catholick and Roman Faith: But on the contrary they affirm, it contains very profound and strong Reasons, agreeable to the most sublime Doctrine of Masters in Divinity, * and they admire the Advantage it will procure to the just Cause.

Some Criticks have judg'd that Book pretty innocent. The famous Morhoff † finds there some good Proofs for the Immortality of the Soul, and he does not believe that Vanini publish'd it with an Intention to attack the Christian Religion. Barleus also speaks well of it, and Dieckman doth not like some should find so much fault with this Book, as if he shew'd himself a complete Naturalist in every Page. Nevertheless F. Merfenne, M. de la Crose, and a Number of others, are of the contrary Opinion. They discover there a Stock of Hypocrisy and Malice, which lasts from the Beginning to the

* This is the Substance of the Approbation.

† Morhoff in *Polyhistor*. Idem in *MSS. de Hist. Liter. Vid. Apol. pro Vanin.* p. 33.

End. My Vote, I must own, is of no great Moment, but I assure you ingenuously I side with the Opinion of the last. I find the *Amphatre* a very dangerous Book, and rather more prejudicial than the *Dialogues*. I agree, the Venom is more hid there than in the last; But it is also more methodical and ensnaring. He seems to combat the antient and modern Atheists, and in effect he gives them the Victory, by his weak and insignificant Answers: But when I say dangerous, I don't mean they are so to a Philosopher but indifferently armed. No Sir, you'll find nothing uncommon in *Vanini*. Some Ideas of *Aristotle*, and *Averroes*, upon Naturalism; some Extravagancies of *Cardan* and *Pomponatius's* Horoscopes of the now reigning Religions: And lastly, some Difficulties of *Cicero* * against *Providence*, agitated before him in *Greece*, by *Epicure*, *Straton*, and *Carneades*, lightly touch'd over again by *Seneca*: † Which are lastly, produced with all their force, by the ingenious Author which every one knows. This is all you'll find in *Vanini*, on the Subject of the Existence of *God*, of the Author of Motion, of his Providence, of his Attributes, of the Origin of Physical Evil, of the Immortality of the Soul, &c. He immediately proposes the State of the Question plain enough, afterwards he relates the best Reasoning of the Scholasticks, pretty much at large; then ridicules 'em, and substitutes in their Place, either the greatest Nonsense in the World, or the most impious Naturalism.

His Preface is arrogant. He explains his Design in the Preface, in a manner not becoming a modest Philosopher. " I propose, says he, in this Work, to unfold,

* See *Lib. 1. 11. De Natura Deorum.*

† See the Book *de Providentia.*

“ and to make plain all the Myſteries of Providence; but don’t expect I ſhould take ’em from the Declamations uſed by *Cicero*, nor from thoſe Dreams, or rather plausible Ravings of the Divine Philoſopher; and yet much leſs from the abſurd Impertinencies of our Scholaſticks: But I ſhall draw them from the Source of the moſt hidden Philoſophy, as being beſt able to quench the thirſt of curious Minds *”. You ſee, he ſpeaks of *Cicero* with great Diſdain, and yet he has ſtole from him through the whole Work; as I hope to make it appear in the Tranſlation I have promiſed you, of the Book of *The Nature of the Gods*; which will be publiſh’d, God willing, next Year, if the Publick doth not diſcourage me.

XXIII. The firſt Diſſertations of the *Amphitheatre* ſeem, at firſt ſight, very innocent: But don’t truſt him, for he ſoon overthrows again what he has eſtabliſh’d, or at leaſt he burthens it with Difficulties, and flings himſelf, at all hazard, into *Averroes’s* Metaphyſicks, where I muſt own ingenuouſly I cannot follow him. The neceſſary Exiſtence of a firſt intelligent Cauſe of Motion, who has at leaſt ranged things in the Order we ſee, is one of our chief Arguments againſt Atheiſts. As for him, he prevaricates upon this Proof, and omits no turn to diſimbarraſs himſelf from it; but here ’tis where he entangles himſelf moſt, and grows perfectly unintelligible: *Spinoſa* is not more obſcure in his *Ethicks*. You know, Sir, this is the Caſe of all Infidels: Nothing is more impenetrable than their Principles, and Providence has wiſely ordered it, that what is deſigned by the wicked to root out of the Hearts of Men,

He attacks the ſtrong-eſt Arguments, of the Neceſſity of the Exiſtence of a firſt Motion.

* Preface to the *Amphit.*

the Belief of a Divinity, is always very obscure, and consequently improper to do the Effect. *Vanini*, after having done all his Endeavours to weaken the Proofs of a first Cause of Motion, substitutes another, as ridiculous as possible to imagine. He reasons upon the Number 9, and draws from it a pretended Demonstration, which he calls *Divino-magica*, or *Caballistica*, and boasts of having proved thereby the Existence of God more strongly, than by the Proof we produced; which is as antient as the World itself. But once more that is his way; he mocks the Christians by proposing their Reasons in an unfair manner; he embroils them by *Aristotelian Subtleties*, and after he has rejected 'em, he substitutes new ones that are pitiful.

He gives
an ambiguous
Definition of
the Divinity.

XXIV. He succeeds best when he throws his Doubts on the first Truths, which are the Foundation of all others; such are for Example, the Existence of *God* and his Providence. As the Nature of these two Objects infinitely exceeds our Capacity, he imagines to have refuted them, when he has shewn the infinite Disproportion there is betwixt the lowness of our Conception, and the height of those Objects. As for Instance, he thought to refute the Divinity, by giving the following Definition of it.

“ You ask me, says he, * what is God; but
 “ if I knew it, I should be God; for no one
 “ knows what God is, but God himself. We
 “ may nevertheless know him in some measure
 “ by his Works, almost in the same manner as
 “ we know the Light of the Sun thro’ a Cloud,
 “ which eclipses it. Behold now how our Hand

* *Amphit.* p. 10.

“ makes bold to describe that first of all Be-
 “ ings, altho’ perhaps very vainly. God is to
 “ himself his Beginning and his End; tho’ he
 “ has neither Beginning nor End. He has no
 “ need neither of one or the other, and yet he
 “ is the Author of both. He subsists continu-
 “ ally without any Time: Equally not suscep-
 “ tible of what is past or to come. He reigns
 “ every where, without any Place; unmove-
 “ able, without any Situation; swift, without
 “ Motion; all, without all things; within eve-
 “ ry thing, without being enclosed; without
 “ every thing, without being excluded. In
 “ every thing, he governs all; without every
 “ thing, he has created. He is good without
 “ Quality; great without Quantity; universal
 “ without Parts; unchangeable tho’ he changes
 “ all: His Will is his Power, and the exerting
 “ his Power doth not differ from his Will:
 “ Simple, in him nothing is in Power, but eve-
 “ ry thing in the Act, he is in himself pure;
 “ the first; the middlemost, and last Act. In
 “ short, he is all, above all, beyond all, before
 “ all, and after all, and he yet remains all.”

XXV. Perhaps you’ll say Sir, I am very bold to translate this Passage after the famous Mr. *Saurin*, who has explained it in one * of his Sermons in a concise manner indeed, but much more elegant; than it is in *Vanini* himself; but I beg you’d remember this is a Letter, where we undertake to discover with Exactness the Venom of our *Atheists*; and not a Sermon where commonly one is satisfy’d with pointing at it, which yet shou’d be done with abundance of Circumspection. As for the rest, you are

* The Title of the Sermon is *sur les profondeurs divines* the 4th, Tom. 1. See *Saurin*’s Answer to *Vanini*’s Definition. *Ibid*

too good a Philosopher to be embarrass'd with our Atheist's Definition. 'Tis not dangerous but to those who have a corporeal Idea of God: But if we suppose, 1. That God is a *pure Spirit*, and consequently without the Sphere of our Imagination. 2. That he is an *infinite Spirit*, and consequently beyond our Ideas: If one supposes, I say, these two Truths, which are self-evident, all the Clouds of *Vanini* are dispersed; all the Jingle of Words disappears: And if any Difficulties remain, they are common to all Systems and Sciences. You may judge of it, Sir, from the short Recapitulation I shall make of that long Definition.

If I knew what is God, I shou'd be God. Not at all, because it would be very easy for God to make himself known to an intelligent Being, of the first Order.

God is to himself his Beginning and End. That is a heap of Words which signifies nothing.

He is susceptible neither of the past nor future. Without doubt. Is there any Past or Futurity in a pure, infinite, and eternal Spirit? No, Let us own to *Vanini* that Eternity is incomprehensible; but he knows very well that it may be demonstrated, as two and two make four. As to the manner of this Eternity, whether it is a *fix'd* Point, or a continual Succession, we leave that to the Philosophers.

He reigns every where, without any Place; that is to say, he is infinite, without being corporeal: Agreed. One might make the same Difficulty about the *Ubi* of our Souls, and answer to the same purpose; the Proportion being observed.

He is good without Quality. God's Goodness is spiritual and moral: Our Infidel forgets himself, with his Quality.

Great

Great without Quantity, universal without Parts.
All this turns upon corporeal Ideas, which must be excluded.

Unchangeable when he changes all. This is no Contradiction; for in changing all, God executes his Design, and remains unchangeable.

Whose Will is Power, and whose Will is confused with the Power. Observe, this is very bold for a Philosopher: Is it not to penetrate into the most obscure part of Divine Nature? As for me, who am not so clear-sighted as our Free-Thinkers, I content my self to say, that altho' the Will of God is always efficacious, one may however distinguish this Will into *conceived* and *executed*: For how cou'd one explain otherways the Predictions of the Prophets, who advise us of the particular Wills of God, many Ages before their Accomplishment?

In whom nothing is in Power, but every thing in the Act. Another Falshood, in my Opinion, which wou'd deprive God of his Sovereign Liberty, and introduce Naturalism.

Lastly, *He is all above, beyond, and within every thing.* All that borders upon the corporeal Ideas which we have refuted already.

XXVI. This is not the only Place, where *Vanini* mocks Religion, and the Attributes of God. In another Place he pretends to defend the Scripture; and accuses the Psalmist of having said, that *the Mercy of the Lord is above all his works*. You may easily comprehend what that means, in the Mouth of a good Man, who is possess'd of the Love of God, and who, in consideration of his Unworthiness, and the Benefaction of the Creator, extols that of his Attributes, which affects and interests him most. *Vanini* takes it all in a metaphysical Sense, and complains of the Preachers, who, founded upon

An insignificant Criticism upon the Psalmist.

these Words, says he, utter Blasphemies, * telling us, that God is infinitely more merciful than just. As if God was not a simple and pure Being, but a Composition of Beginning and End, subsequent to what he is composed of. Behold, Sir, I beseech you, his manner of Philosophising. Men speak of the moral Attributes of the Divinity, if 'tis permitted to use the Expression, of his Justice, and his Mercy; things where the Question is not about Composition. Nevertheless, our Caviller seems to be so much in Pain about it, that he talks of it, as of different Principles, which, by being more or less exercised in the Divine Essence, cou'd alter the simplicity thereof. Where is the Consequence? 'Tis true, it would be imprudent to maintain, absolutely in a Sermon, that God is more merciful than just: But for all that, we should not call it Blasphemy, and bring Heaven and Earth together, as if all was lost; since the Person who unadvertedly speaks those Words, takes them in the Sense of the Prophet, *viz.* that as we are Sinners, nothing touches us more than Divine Compassion. But *Vanini* has his Views; he endeavours to put the Scripture against itself, and embroil the Christians, and afterwards to ridicule the Mystery of Redemption.

Cardan's
Horoscope
of the Christian
Religion.

XXVII. After he has thrown some Clouds over the Existence and Perfections of God, he attacks the Christian Religion indirectly, but in a pleasant manner. You'd never imagine it, Sir; he steals from *Cardan*, *Jesus Christ's* Horoscope. Some Men indeed, have doubted *Cardan* did not believe the Truths of our Religion: *Vanini* maintains that he was not very superstitious,

* *Amphis. Dissert.* XIX, towards the End.

and yet proves the contrary, by quoting that famous Horoscope, which he calls impious. We will call him, if you please, *the superstitious Atheist*, and you'll see if the Definition becomes him, by examining one of his famous Astrological Whimsies: But under Condition that you'll pardon me, Sir, if I bewilder my self in the *Celestial Geography*; for I have never wander'd about in that Place.

Now he pretends that there have been in the Constellations of *our Saviour*, such Wonders, and in so great a Number, that if we were to stick only to the natural and astronomical Reasons, this *Jesus* must have had all the Grandeur and Perfections the Concourse of Stars can furnish: But the chief Points that characterise him, must be *Compassion, Justice, Fidelity, Simplicity* and *Charity*, * not only for himself, but also for his Sectaries. He thinks, his Sect was to root itself in the World, so as to last until the return of the Eclipticks, that is 4000 Years, after which time there wou'd be a general Reformation in the Universe. He doth not say positively, that all what appeared Divine in *Jesus Christ*, had depended from the Constellations; but he pretends it was God, who caused him to be born at that Juncture, to make his Birth memorable in all Ages. 'Tis with that Confidence, says he, that I thought proper to publish this Horoscope, altho' I kept it secret more than twenty Years, by a Scruple of Religion. Those last Words render Cardan suspicious; for, what reason was there to suppress, by a Scruple of Religion, a Discovery, which invincibly wou'd prove the Divinity of the Chri-

* Cardan, in Comment. ad Ptolomæ, Lib. 2. p. 369. Ed. Lugd. 1555.

stian Religion, if it was a good one? But *Cardan* introduces into this Horoscope certain Things, which are not altogether agreeable to the chief Articles of our Belief; and this is the Scruple which detained him: Those sort of cowardly Limitations and Precautions are commonly a sign that there is a Snake in the Grass.

Be that as it will, this is the Horoscope; it is composed of ten rare and singular Characters *.

The ten
Characters
of *Jesus*
Christ's Ho-
roscope ac-
cording to
Cardan.

1. The *Conjunction* of the *Heads of the Balance* of the eighth and ninth Orb, not only in the Elliptic Section with the Equinoctial Circle; but also with the Head of the Ram of the little Circle of the eighth Orb, in the Longitude with the head of the Ram, which makes the Center of the little Circle of the ninth Orb. From thence our *Italian* draws wonders about the lasting of Christianity, and he advances boldly, that it will last 6030 Years; which far exceeds *Lactantius's* Calculation, who gave it but 500 Years in all, and of that of *Dr. Craig*, who placed its Period in the Year 3153 †.

2. The second Character of the Horoscope is the Comet, which appeared at his Birth, being the same with that extraordinary Star, of which the Evangelist speaks, which brought the Philosophers from the remotest parts of the *East* to *Bethlehem* §.

3. The third is *Jupiter*, who promises sedate Manners, gentle Deportment, Eloquence and Wisdom. *For that Reason*, says *Cardan*, *our Saviour began to dispute in the Temple being but twelve Years old.*

* *Cardan*, *ibid.* p. 373.

† See Dict. Hist. & Critique of *Bayle*, Tom. iii.

§ Evangel. Matthæi. Ch. ii. 2.

4. The fourth is the end of the *Virgin*, a Star of the first Magnitude, which has more of *Venus* than of *Mars*, and which portends also Eloquence, favour of Men and knowledge of Things to come. *And every one knows*, says he, *that Jesus Christ prophecy'd.*

5. The fifth is the point of the Autumnal Equinox; *for he was born*, says he, *a Moment before Midnight.*

6. The sixth is the Summer Tropick, which was in the middle of the Heavens at the time of his Birth: And according to *Ptolomy* signifies a great Disposition to establish a new Law in the World.

7. The seventh is another Star called *Hercules*, of the second Magnitude and of the Nature of *Mars*: Which announced to him and his Sectarians Combats, and Sufferings of Martyrdom, to the Confessors and also all the Orders of religious Chivalry.

8. The eighth Sign is another Conjunction of the Head of the *Ram*, *Jupiter* and *Saturn* being joined in *Cancer*. This Conjunction portended him a publick and shameful Death.

9. The ninth is the Sun, which presides over all the Constellations, and promises a Death followed by an immortal Name.

10. Lastly, the tenth is *Mercury*, who joins there with the Sun, and appoints the sense and hability of the Legislator. *And we know*, says he, *that the People of Palestine* were astonished at *Jesus Christ's* Responses, which came no doubt from human Wisdom and not the Divinity, which may be without the Succours of Constellations. *And this*, concludes our Italian, *are the ten Signs of this wonderfull Constellation, by the concurrence of which we have seen a true Representation*

Representation of the Wonders to come, ranged in the eternal Order of Things.

Now Sir, what say you to this Horoscope? Is it not very just, considering it was made after the Time, and should we not apply to *Cardan*, what the Author of the *Nouveaux Elemens de Geometrie*, said to his brother Author of the *Art de penser*; that *he had not guessed amiss at Things past*? But among the rest, what think you of the Passage, *that the Responses of our Lord had not been the produce of Divine Wisdom*? Is that the Language of a Christian, or of a Man, whose Brains are confused, and his Eyes drowsy by Star-gazing? What he adds, *that then was seen a Representation of the Wonders ranged already in the eternal Chain of Things*: Is that any ways edifying, or doth it agree with what he said above, *viz.* 'that God is the first Author of that glorious Constellation? In truth, it costs our *Italians* nothing to contradict themselves; *Cardan* doth it sometimes, and *Vanini* always.

*Vanini's
Thoughts
on this Ho-
roscope.*

What is your Opinion, the last thinks of this Horoscope? He regards it as the most dangerous Venom that ever has been insinuated against the Christian Religion: For after he has rehearsed all what we said above, he falls in a Passion and darts Fire and Flames, he fetches deep Sighs, and you would imagine he is going to be choaked *, *O perditissimos Sermones! O nefanda verba! O inquinatissimum Scriptorem!* 'Tis done, Christianity is going to expire and nothing remains but to raise it an Epitaphe!

XXVIII. Nevertheless you see Sir, that this Horoscope is of no moment at all. Astrology, according to the Sentiments of all Men of Un-

* See *Dissertat.* vii. and viii. of the *Amphisheatre*.

derstanding, is the most pitiful of all Sciences. Its Principles are Illusion itself. Mr. Bayle has run it down in such a manner, that it will never recover the Blow. See his *Pensées diverses* and Vol. I. de la *Rép. aux questions d'un provincial*, on this Head, and I am persuaded it will move your pity to reflect, that human Minds have been amused with so trivial a Science. All *Cardan's* Horoscope is built upon two Illusions, a certain *Fact* and an absurd *Consequence*. The *Fact* is, that we should know the Day and Hour of the Birth of *Jesus Christ*; but nothing is more doubtful than that Supposition. Consult the Chronologers, and all will unanimously tell you, they are uncertain in that Respect, viz. about the Year, the Month, the Day, the Hour, and all what *Cardan* supposes as agreed upon. The absurd Consequence he draws from this Constellation is, that it seems to him so extraordinary, that it could not suit any one but *Jesus Christ*; that there has never been any more glorious, and that without doubt *God* would not have caused him to be born under that Constellation, if it signified nothing. But *Cardan* does not perceive that his Consequence is absurd for several Reasons.

1. He should have proved before hand, the certainty of Astrology in general, and the solidity of a Horoscope, before he made that of *Jesus Christ*.

2. He should be positively assured of the Year, Month, Day and Hour *Jesus Christ* was born in; which he was not.

3. Were there no other Children born at *Jerusalem* or *Bethlehem* about the same time, or perhaps the same Minute? Why should then the same *Situation* of Stars be favourable to

H

Jesus

Jesus Christ and fatal to all the Infants of *Bethlehem*?

4. Lastly, if there was any Appearance of all that, how came it to pass that it never has been discovered but sixteen Ages afterwards? *God* and *Nature* produce nothing in Vain: Why should so important a Constellation have been hid from us so long a time?

How he
answers
the Objec-
tions of the
origin of
Evil.

XXIX. But I trespass on your Patience Sir, and *Cardan* and *Vanini* abuse mine, so that I shall say no more of these wild Notions. I have told you already that the Strength of the *Amphitheatre* consists in reporting *Cicero's* and *Cardan's* Objections against Providence; and that is what he gives the greatest attention to. He distinguishes one Difficulty from the other, those of the *physical* and *moral Evil*, and he proposes them all very precisely. He forgets not the common Answers; but calls 'em Illusions and Scholastical Filth. *Bagatelles*, says he, *the greatest of Bagatelles!* when he alledges a judicious Solution. For Example, if you Answer to the Difficulty taken from the moral Evil; that *God* would not make perfect Creatures, but susceptible of Blame and Praise, and that with that View he has endowed 'em with a sort of Liberty, which assisted by Education, good Examples and Prayers, may resist Evil, and procure itself by the goodness of *God* a distinguishing Glory upon Earth, and chiefly in Heaven. He runs down *St. Basil's* Thoughts, which he introduces, in an abusive manner. *Nugæ*, says he, *nugacissimæ*. *Nonsense*, says he, *God only is the sovereign free Agent, Jesus Christ also and the Holy Virgin; nevertheless they never have sinned:* And behold the Solution annihilated, and the difficulty remaining in all its Force. But where are then all those new and satisfactory Ideas, which
are

He ridic-
cules *St.*
Basil.

are promised in the Title and Preface, and which should be so remote from the Declamations of Cicero, the Ravings of Plato, and the Filth of Scholasticks? 'Tis in vain for you to seek 'em in the *Amphitheatre*. He has none to give: He dreads the Inquisitors; or when he hazards something, that is pure Naturalism.

The World, says he, *is perhaps an Animal, of which we all are Members: Those Modifications are essential to it.* And thus finishes his profound Dissertation and Apology on Providence*. And falls into Naturalism.

XXX. He goes yet farther; for he pretends that God is the Author of all Things, and even of Sin. *The knowledge of God is the Cause of all Things*, says he, *for that God should know any Thing without himself, except he had resolved so to do, is a thing which contradicts itself. Therefore knowing himself, as the Cause, he knows also all the Effects, and consequently produces them*†. But if God has resolved to create a free Being, will he still be the Cause of its particular Determinations, or the abuse of its Liberty? He doth not carry the Difficulty to that point. And elsewhere he laughs at the Decrees of God, and of Predestination, after a profane manner. “ Going down the *Rhine*, says he §, I embarked “ at *Strasbourg*, with a German Divine, who seeing a Raven, when he entered the Boat, was “ so frightened, that he would go back: But I declared to him, that, for my part, I was resolved to depart, if even I knew we were to “ perish. *The unalterable Will of God*, said I, “ *must be done; who from all Eternity has regulated the Days of our Life; according to the* “ *Words of the Prophet.* Encourag’d by this

* See Dissertat. x. xi. xii. to xvi. of the *Amphib.*

† *Amphit.* Dissert. xv.

§ Dialog. p. 425.

“ Speech, he despised the terrible Menaces of
 “ the *Rhine*, and we came safe to our Jour-
 “ ney’s End”.

He com-
 pares
Christ’s Mi-
 racles with
 those of *St.*
Dominick.

Refutation
 of this
 Compari-
 son.

XXXI. What *Vanini* did with respect to the first Truths in general, he doth also in regard to Miracles. He puts ’em first as Proofs against Atheists: Afterwards he alledges the Objection of *Machiavel* and others, who regard them as Fables, contrived by Priests to acquire Glory at the expence of the Ignorant. The Answer to *Machiavel* as to Miracles was very easy. He had nothing to do, but faithfully to mark the Circumstances, to distinguish ’em from Fables, viz. that they were numerous, conspicuous, continual, and even persecuted by human Authority, and yet followed by the Conversion of many thousands of Souls. But instead of that, what does he? In the Apology of the Miracles of *St. Francis*, and *St. Dominick*: *In truth*, says he *, *both one and the other professed Poverty and Humility: and consequently ’tis not for Interest, or vain Glory, that they have published their Miracles.* What an Answer! *Vanini* would render the Miracles of *Christ* and his Apostles suspected, and therefore he compares ’em to those of *St. Francis* and *Dominick*. But he will not remember that our Saviour and his Apostles always lived among Enemies, where all their Words and Actions were equally observed to make them a handle for Calumny and Persecution: Instead of that *St. Francis* and *Dominick* lived in Christian Countries, devoted from a long time to Superstition; and they were armed with the Thunderbolts of the holy Sea, to terrify or punish Gainfayers; *Dominick*, among others, was the Inventor and

* *Amphith. Dissertat. viii.*

first Hero of the Inquisition. You may judge then, whether it was safe to contest his Miracles. But it was not so with those of *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles; there were sure Rewards for those who could overthrow or disprove them.

XXXII. He is also very witty upon *eternal Punishments*: He declares first, that they cannot be proved from natural Reasons; and when Scripture is alledged against him; *a holy Answer!* says he, *which however gives Atheists no great uneasiness, they having no more faith in that holy Book, than I in Æsop's Fables, in old Womens Tales, or the Superstitions of the Alcoran* *.

XXXIII. Lastly Sir, in the whole *Amphitheatre* reigns an Air of Hypocrisy and Malice, which gives us a very disadvantageous Idea of *Vanini's* Heart. We have quoted some Examples of it. And here is one more, with which I shall conclude the abstract of that Book. *As to me, says he, whose Name is Christian and Surname Catholick, If I had not learned it from the Church, who is the infallible Mistress of Truth, I should hardly believe the Soul to be immortal. I don't blush to say it: On the contrary I glory in it, for I fulfill St. Paul's Precept, in captivating my Understanding in Obeisance to Faith, which is stronger in me, because 'tis built upon that Principle: GOD HAS SAID IT* †. That Principle, which at first Sight seems so edifying and is so subject of being repeated by Authors great and little, (God knows to what End) would be edifying to me indeed, if I had not been made to hope something else by the Title and Preface. What! Mr. *Vanini*, you promise us Mountains and Wonders against Atheists, you take upon you

* Amphit. Dissert. xxvii.

to explain all the Mysteries of Providence; you raise our Hopes with new Ideas in Defence of the first Truths; and instead of that, you send us back to Scripture. Was it worth while to write a Book for that? The meanest of the *Licentiats* at *Naples* could have done as much.

Add to this, that *Vanini* himself had no great Opinion of his *Amphitheatre*. He says in his *Dialogues*, that he had advanced there many Things which he did not give Credit to. "But," says *Alexander* *, you have given a physical Reason, in your *Amphitheatre*, why that Child newly born, did speak immediately after his Birth. Puh! says *Julius*, I have advanced in that Book many Things, I don't believe my self: So goes the *World*. I am not surprised at it says *Alexander*, I tell it every Day to my Friends: This *World* is a Nest full of Fools: I except however the Princes and Popes.

XXXIV. Don't loose Patience Sir, we are at last come to his strange *Dialogues*, which are in so great Reputation and deserve so little. Behold here the Title, which discovers the Impiety thereof. *Julii Caesaris Vanini Neapolitani Theologi, philosophi & juris utriusque Doctoris, de admirandis Naturæ Reginae Deaq; mortalium Arcanis, Libri quatuor. Lutetia apud Adrianum Perier. anno 1616. Sub privilegio Regis*: That is to say, Of the Mysteries of Nature, the Queen and Goddess of Mortals. Lib. iv. by *Julius Caesar Vanini*, the Neapolitan, Doctor of Divinity, Philosophy and Law at *Paris*. By *Adrian Perier*. 1616. with the King's Priviledge. On the back side of the Title you read the fol-

* Dialog. pag. 428.

lowing Approbation, " We underwritten Doctors of Divinity of *Paris*, certify to have read these *Dialogues* of *Julius Caesar Vanini*, a famous Philosopher, and found nothing repugnant to the Catholick, Apostolick, and *Roman* Religion in them; but on the contrary, think 'em well worth being printed: The 20th of May, 1616. Signed F. Edmond Corradin, Guardian of the Convent of *Minimes* at *Paris*. F. Claude le Petit, Doctor Regent.

The Dedication is to the Marshall of *Bas-
sompierre*; it wou'd be good enough if it was not *Italian*, and cringing. *What shall I say*, says he, *of the Charms of your Beauty?* 'Tis by that means you have deserved the tenderness of an infinite Number of Ladies, more charming than the *Helens* of old. 'Tis also that same Beauty, which triumphs over the Conceitedness of *Atheists*, and imposes on them Silence, and suppresses their *Impiety*. For when they but contemplate the Majesty and Statefulness of your *Visage*, they must readily own, that even among mankind there are found some *Traces* of *Divinity*. His Enthusiasm carries him yet farther, and betrays him. *If I was*, says he, *a Disciple of Plato*, *I shou'd kiss and adore you, as the Soul of the World!* A villainous and very suspicious Commendation, after the Story of the Convent, which I told you! *

The Dedication basely flattering.

He finishes his Dedication, asking a Charity of his Heroe, in so pitiful a manner, that I am ashamed to relate it, *pudendâ, miserandâque oratione*, if you allow me the Expression of *Suetonius*. He tells him that 'tis not surprising that every body compares him to the Sun; and that he, *Vanini*, gives him the Preference above it. † *The Sun*, says he, *darting his golden Rays*, has never

He asks a Charity.

* See Paragraph XIV.

† Dial. Epist. Nuncupator.

enriched me, but when your Excellency shall please to cast a favourable Eye upon me, I shall then be all Gold. Just now the Marshal was the Soul of the World, in the *Platonick* Stile, and all at once he is no more than the Sun; but then the Rays of his Aspect are so many precious Ingots, that will make our Infidel easy. He has great need of it, since he makes no scruple of shewing us the Bag and Stick of *Diogenes*. 'Tis true, his Comparisons are not very philosophical; but at that time they were fashionable. The Sun was the Soul of all witty Performances; it entered every where, even into the Epistles Dedictory. *Malherbe* and *Voiture*, like the rest, dealt much in Rays, and perhaps wou'd do so still, if *Boileau* had not ridiculed that ill Taste in his first Poem *. " *Authors of that Age*, says " *Mr. La Motte*, with a Sneer, † *knew only to* " give their Mistresses a Preheminence above " the *Aurora*, or Sun: Almost all the Per- " formances in Poetry turn'd upon that To- " pick, and I cannot conceive how they could " handle so often an Expression, which must " put a Man out of Patience at first sight.

An Appro-
bation of
his Dia-
logues, by
many learn-
ed Men.

XXXV. The Advertisement which follows the Dedication of the *Dialogues*, recommends the Book as a Master Piece, which two Disciples have industriously compiled from the Author's Lectures, to favour the Bookseller and Publick. *Vanini* is there named the Prince of the Philosophers of his Time, and Aristotle revived: *Unicus atate nostra verus Philosophorum Princeps & Aristoteles redivivus. Eminentissimus & toto Orbe clarissimus Vir*. Besides, he is praised in Greek and Latin Verses. One *George Certain*, a Physician at *Paris*, makes no Difficulty

* Discours au Roy. *Boileau*. Tom. 1.

† *La Motte* Discours sur la Poësie. Tom. 1.

to ascribe him a great share of Sense, a superior Capacity in Reasoning; and the Laurel above all *Italian Writers*.

*Vaninus, vir mente potens Sophiæque Magister
Maximus, Italiæ decus & nova Gloria Gentis.*

'Tis difficult to comprehend, how any Doctors and Poets, at *Paris*, were bold enough to approve, and praise such Dialogues, with so much Prostitution. Was it Ignorance? Was it Malice? says *Mr. de la Crose*; Ignorance from the side of the Divines, and Malice from the Poets*. You'll see, Sir, from the Character I am going to give you of the Book, that the Reflections of that learned Man, were not without Ground.

XXXVI. If by the *Amphitheatre*, he had in view to make Atheists Philosophers, I doubt not but by his Dialogues, he proposed to make profane Men Atheists, and to hurry them into Debauchery, after having given 'em a Dislike to Religion: The Conclusion of the Book is

*Perduto e tutto il tempo
Che in Amar non si spende.*

All the Time is lost which is not spent in Love.

He reasons there but very little on matters of Religion, he rails continually, and some-

* *Garasse* takes off the difficulty in his *Doctrina Curieuse*. p. 998. I must here discover his raving Despair --- in as much as we know this pernicious Atheist, after he had obtained the Privilege and Approbation of the Doctors, he maliciously changed his Design, and put in the Press, instead of what they had seen, this imperfect Scheme of Atheism, and what is still worse, put to the Front of it a Title, which wou'd not have pass'd under the Seal of *France*, or the Pens of the Doctors, if they had look'd those Words in the Face. *De admirandis natura Regine Deæque, &c.*

times in a shocking manner, without taking the trouble of covering his Impieties.

The whole Work is divided into Four Parts, which all make sixty Dialogues. The 1st Part contains fourteen of them, treating of the Sun, its Figure, Colour, its first Mover, its Poles, and Eternity: Of the Stars, of Fire, of Comets, of the Rainbow, of the Thunder and Lightning, of Snow, Rain, Motion and Rest; of Gun-Powder, Air and its Corruption. The 4th, 5th, and 6th contain most impious Sentiments.

The 2d Part is composed of thirteen Dialogues, chiefly upon that part of Natural Philosophy, regarding the Earth and Water. *Cardan* and *Aristotle* are there copied every where.

The 3d contains twenty three Dialogues, where he examines every thing regarding the Generation of Animals, and the different Passions of Men.

Lastly, The 4th has but ten Dialogues upon the Religion of the Heathens, which he abuses in such a manner, that it appears one may attack the Christian Religion, under pretence of confuting the Pagans. Here he discovers his Venom very openly, both upon the Oracles, the Miracles, the Gift of divers Tongues to the Apostles, and the Paradise and Hell. Afterwards he finishes deploring the Time one looses without loving; submitting at the same time his Book to the Examination and Judgment of the Holy See. You'll excuse me, Sir, for not following him here Step by Step: My Letter wou'd swell too much, and be too tedious to you. I shall content my self with giving you an Abridgment of his System, in regard to Religion.

— *Longa est materia, longæ.*

Ambages, sed summa sequar fastigia rerum. *

* Virg. *Æneid.* Lib. 1.

XXXVII. First, no body can deny his being a *Materialist*, which is what we now-a-days call a *Spinofiste*. He seems to be a *Materialist*.

In refuting *Pomponatius*, who held, that certain Intelligences mov'd the Heavens, he concludes his Reasoning against him in this manner. "If God (says he) is the cause of all things, and if he is omnipresent, Where is, I beseech you, the necessity of your Intelligences? If his Omnipotence is much more than sufficient to have created the Heavens, and adorn'd them with admirable Ingenuity, without the Interposition of any Creature, why will you have it, he cannot move them without their Assistance?"

Would you not say, Sir, it is the force of Truth makes him thus speak? But hold, be not deceived: A little while after, *Alexander* resumes the Discourse, and by the Genius of *Pomponatius*, he conjureth his Disciple, *Julius Caesar*, to declare unto him openly his Thoughts concerning the first Mover of the Heavens.

Vanini yields to his Request, and utters this Confession.* *Had I not been educated*, says he, He says the Soul of the Heaven is its Form. *in the Schools of Christians, I would assert, that the Heaven is an Animal, mov'd by its own Form; which is its Soul: But perceiving himself too forward in his Assertion, he adds, because a scrupulous Piety hath seized the Understandings of some Persons, and hinders them from attributing a Soul, to the World, What dare we then freely profess - - ? This (continues he) That the Mass of Heaven, which is globular, is mov'd spherically, by its own Form.*

Were I not a Christian, (says he in another place) † *I shou'd embrace that Opinion, of the Eter-* That if he was not a Christian, he would conclude for the Eternity of the World.

* *vid. Dial. IV.*

† *Dial. p. 135.*

nity of the *World*, because I can find no Origin of Mountains. The Foundation of his Atheism is very particular, he cannot discover the Origin of Mountains, as of Republicks; therefore the World is Eternal. 'Tis pity he did not live in this our Age, when Dr. *T. Burnet* would have taken him out of that Difficulty, by his System of the Causes and Effects of the Deluge, so excellently treated of in that ingenious Work. *

That the ancient Philosophers believed so as well as himself.

A little lower he sets forth the same Impiety, as the Opinions of the antient Philosophers: "For according to them, (says he) but especially † *Plato* and *Aristotle*, the World is Eternal - - - - Wherefore the Customs and Rites which are now in use, have been repeated above one hundred thousand millions of times, and will be again as often as they have been. Nothing is new under the Sun, and this Vicissitude being Eternal, its Cause must be so likewise: Now this Cause can be sought for but in the Cælestial Bodies in God and the Intelligences; therefore it is by the Influence of Cælestial Bodies, guided by Intelligences, appointed by God, that Laws take their Rise, Increase, and their End."

He makes a God of Nature, and nevertheless atheist, allows it imperfect.

Proceeding a little farther, he intirely throws off his Veil, and calleth *Nature* a *Faculty* of *God*, or rather, *God himself*, defining it by *Motion*, apologising for the Faults or Imperfections, which are found in it by the Example of an *Artificer*, who having gross and disorder'd matter to work upon, cannot succeed to make it perfect. In like manner, says he, *Nature* having found such kind of matter, produces every thing imperfect. Here is then a God, dull and unactive: A first

* *Telluris Theoria Sacra*, &c. † Dial. LII.

Cause full of Imperfection. It finds out a disorder'd and irregular matter to work upon, and this matter is no other than itself; and hence is the Origin of moral and physical Evil cunningly discover'd. But let us hearken again to our Atheist.

In what Religion (says *Alexander*) have the antient Philosophers ador'd God? "In the Religion of Nature only, (replies *Vanini*) which Nature is itself that God, since it only is the Origin of the Motion impress'd in the Souls of all Men. All other Religions, according to those antient Sages, were but Illusions; not forg'd by any good or evil Genius's, (for they never believ'd there were any such Beings) but by Princes and Magistrates, in order to curb their People; and fomented by ambitious and covetous Priests, which, instead of true and real Miracles, to confirm its Veracity, made use of certain Scriptures, the Originals of which are no where to be found; and of which the Rewards and Punishments regard but another Life, fearing that the Imposture shou'd be too early discover'd in this. For, added they, Whoever return'd from thence? Thus it is, the Vulgar is kept in Slavery, by the pretended dread of a supreme Being, that Beholds all things; and will Reward and Punish. *Lucretius*, the Epicurean, hath sung this Truth.

* "Fear, in this World, hath first occasion'd Gods." Such is the Religion of *Julius Cæsar Vanini*, and the impious System from whence *Spinosa*, and all the other Infidels of our Age, have extracted their Opinions. And

* *Vanini* is mistaken, it is not *Lucretius* hath said this, it is *Petronius*, in the Fragments we have remaining of his. See Mr. *Burman's Petronius*. P. 676.

there

there is a Manuscript in *Holland*, among the Curious, in which the above Passage is often repeated: So greatly hath it dazled superficial Minds.

A short
Answer of
Mr. Ber-
nard's, to
those that
confound
God with
Nature.

XXXVIII. " But what is that Nature,*
thus put for the Wise God? (says a judicious
Journalist) Is it an universal Nature, that
expands itself in all Creatures, and makes
them what they are? If so, that Nature
must be intelligent, since it communicates In-
telligence to certain Creatures: And this is
" exactly the God we adore, omnipresent to all
" Beings, and their sole Creator. If by that
" Nature they understand the particular Na-
" ture of each judicial Being, and which is
" not separate from the Being itself, we ask,
" Who is the Author of those particular Na-
" tures; are they Eternal, or do they produce
" themselves? They are not the former, since
" the same with those Beings, we perceive, are
" brought forth and die; and to say they are
" the latter, is a monstrous Absurdity. If
" they further assert, that those particular Na-
" tures, are distinct from those Beings, in
" which they inhere, and to whom they give
" Being: We ask again, Have they any Idea
" of those Natures? If they have not, they
" know not that they say. And if they have,
" let them be so good as to communicate it to
" us; then we shall make it easily appear,
" they must necessarily recur to a supreme in-
" telligent Principle. " This is an Argument
often made use of against those Atheists, and
which we must not cease repeating, until they
have produc'd new Cavils. They perpetually
affirm, it is Nature made all things; but what

* Nouv. de la Rep. des Lettres, *Novemb.* 1709. p. 494.

do they really mean by that Nature? Let them but give us a clear and distinct Idea of it; let them inform us how the various parts of matter became organis'd of themselves? How they can think, and, in short, how they are depriv'd of, or lose that Faculty of Thinking? Let them but coolly peruse the last of the * Bishop of *Cambray's Works*, and unfold to us, if they can, the Mechanism of the World, without the Supposition of an all-wise Atheist.

Vanini, without the least shadow of Proof, dogmatically asserts, that all Religions are the Inventions of Princes. But this is what he could not say of the Christian, since all the Remains of antient History conspire to disprove him. He tells us, the Originals of our Scriptures are nowhere to be found: As if that prov'd any thing against those we possess, or that innumerable and authentick Copies are not of the same Force and Value, in historical matters, as the Originals themselves. The Promises and Threats in the Gospel, relate chiefly to a future State, it's true; yet it doth not from thence follow, but that the Wicked are often chastis'd and punish'd in this; as *Vanini*, and several others.

XXXIX. Have you a mind to know, Sir, what are his Thoughts concerning the Origin of Mankind? This again, is a troublesome Precipice, in the way of those Infidels; nor do they indeed, know how to escape it; they are drove, about this matter, into difficult Straights: It is here they abandon their Reason, and talk extravagantly. "Men sprang forth like Mush-rooms (say they). *Diodorus Siculus* imagines the first Man was brought forth out of the Slime of the Earth (says *Vanini* †) but if so, ob-

Origin of
Mankind,
according
to *Vanini*.

Opinion of
Diodorus
Siculus.

* Demonst. of the Exist. of God, 2d Edit. *Paris*.

† Dial. XXXVII.

The same
with that
of Carda-
nus.

“ serves *Alexander*, how doth it happen, that
“ in five hundred thousand Years, since
“ which, the World hath form’d itself, (ac-
“ cording to that Atheist) there has been
“ none brought forth in that manner? Ne-
“ verthelefs, he is not the only (replies *Va-*
“ *nini*) who hath taken that Story for Truth,
“ and is assur’d, that by the concurrence of the
“ Stars it is very practicable ——— and this is
“ the Opinion of *Cardanus*: He pretends, that
“ as the smaller Animals, Mice, and Fishes,
“ are produc’d by Putrefaction, it is very prob-
“ able, that the greater Animals, and even all
“ in general, are deriv’d from them also. A
“ handsome Method of reasoning, (replies *Alex-*
“ *ander*) a Mouse may be brought forth out of
“ Putrefaction, therefore a Man may also ———!
“ Are there not now sufficient heaps of Filth
“ and Slime? Why then is there not sometimes
“ a Horse, sometimes an Ox produc’d from it?
“ That’s right, (says *Vanini*) but *Diodorus Si-*
“ *clus* relates, that in a certain part of the *Nile*,
“ where it overflows, leaving behind it as it
“ were a Bed of *Mud*, which as soon as it is
“ heated by the Sun, there are produc’d from
“ it, Animals of a monstrous Size. That’s
“ well, (says *Alexander*) but as for me, I could
“ never subscribe to such a Lye.

Strange
Fancies of
some Athe-
ists about it.

This is not all. *Vanini* resumes the Discourse,
and goes on, saying, “ Others have dream’d,
“ * that the first Man has taken his Origin
“ from Mud, putrified by the Corruption of cer-
“ tain Monkeys, Swine, and Frogs; and thence,
“ (they say) proceeds the great Resemblance
“ there is betwixt our Flesh and Propensions,
“ and those of those Creatures. Other Athe-

“ theists more mild have thought that none
 “ but the *Æthiopiaus* are produced from a Race
 “ of Monkeys, because the same degree of
 “ heat is found in both. Truly (replies *Alexander*) I wonder that those People can dis-
 “ pute the excellency of Man above other
 “ Creatures, when they behold the uprightness
 “ of his Structure. Well! (answers *Vanini*)
 “ Atheists cry out to us continually, that the
 “ first Men went upon all four as other Beasts, If the first
 “ and 'tis by Education only, they have changed Men went
 “ this Custom, which, nevertheless in their upon all
 “ old Age returns again. I should be glad four.
 “ to see the Experiment (says *Alexander*) If a
 “ Child just born, and brought up in a Fo-
 “ rest, should walk upon all four. But let us
 “ abandon those Deliriums to Atheists, and
 “ hold to the Rules prescribed by our Faith.

Is it possible in so small a space to heap to-
 gether such wretched Nonsense! The forma-
 tion of Animals attributed to Putrefaction, the
 corruption of other Creatures or the position
 of the Stars, and amongst the rest, the *Æthio-*
pians to the race of Monkeys; however, if he
 had said, that the first Monkey was brought
 forth by a Devil and a She-Moor, that might
 have been more likely; but it should be con-
 sider'd an *Æthiopian* hath Reason, a Monkey
 hath none, and that no Being can communi-
 cate to another, what it hath not itself. And
 what do you think Sir, of those Men who
 walked upon all four, and now their Descen-
 dants upon two? It is certain, it is by Indus-
 try and Education, for if a Child was brought
 up in a Wood, he would undoubtedly live as
 the Monkeys and Bears; and in that Case
 Experience might make for *Vanini*. A Man
 of Credit assured me, that there was found

in *Denmark*, a young Man of about fourteen or fifteen Years old, who lived in the Woods with the Bears, and who could not be distinguished from them but by his Shape. They took him, and learned him to speak; he said then, he could remember nothing but only since the time they took him from amongst the Bears. But whence comes that Industry equally amongst all People of the Universe? Why is there not some Island, some Tract, where Men now walk upon all four? Why are they at present all *Bipedes*? There can be given but one of these two Reasons; either because that *God* created him in that Posture, in which he hath preserved himself in an uninterrupted Traditional Education, or because that such is the very Nature of his Being, and that that Industry which *Vanini* attributes to him is natural and essential.

If Man has
been formed
to govern
Brutes

XL. What he adds concerning the Power of Man above other Creatures is also as impious *. As for me, (says *Alexander*) I always believed that Man had been made to master and govern Brutes. How (replies *Vanini*) dare you say that
 “ Man can master a Basilisk? Yes, (answers *Alexander*) and sometimes kills him; and the
 “ Basilisk sometimes kills the Man (replies *Julius*); and where is that Man that ever framed
 “ a Republick for the Government of Basilisks,
 “ Bees, Swallows or Eagles? Truly though
 “ Man can sometimes catch them, he is oftner
 “ yet caught by them. The Crocodile know-
 “ eth well how to prey on those who drink
 “ along the *Nile*, securing them in the wind-
 “ ing of his Tail: And the Polypus spares not
 “ the Divers”.

* Dial. xxxvii.

To this *Alexander* judiciously answers, "That our Natures are no more the same since the Fall": And Sighs in reflecting on the Felicity of our first Parents. "Groan not (answers thereupon, *Vanini* in an ironical and profane Manner) Man since the Fall masters the Sheep, and could before the Fall, even the Serpent." — He pauses here, as if *Alexander* interrupted his Discourse, who upon that, tells him *he understood what he meant*. "This I will say (says *Julius*) O happy Crime that has procured us so great a Redeemer, for now we not only are Masters of all Creatures, but we have even the Angels for our Instructors. But let us leave this I pray you to the antient Sages of the *Sorbonne*; let us rather exert ourselves in philosophical Matters". Those are some of his common Transitions, after having sufficiently derided the Mysteries of Christianity.

Profane
Notions of
Vanini con-
cerning our
first Pa-
rents.

XLI. But nothing can come up to his Impiety in the Parallel he draws between the Empire of *God* and that of the Devil, I hesitated sometime, whether I should transcribe it in *French*. I determined at last to do it, upon considering that *Mr. Bayle* had already as good as done it in the Article of *Xenophanes*, which is no other than an Illustration of *Vanini's* Arguments: Moreover, that it coincides with *Mr. Bayle's* chief Difficulty concerning the Consequence of moral, and the extent of physical Evil, but suffer me for once to act contrary to my Inclination.

His Impie-
ty in mak-
ing the De-
vil superior
to God.

Exhorresco referens!

* "One may infer from the Canon of the Scriptures (says *Vanini*, personating a Liber-

* Dial. p. 420.

“tine) that the Power of the Devil is greater
 “than that of *God* himself. It was against
 “the Will of *God* that *Adam* and *Eve* fell,
 “and lost all Mankind; and even when the
 “Son of *God* came in the World, to atone
 “for that Evil, the Devil animating the Mind
 “of his Condemners, *Christ* declares, that that
 “*was his time and the Power of Darknefs*, and
 “so ends his Life by a most infamous Death.
 “One may likewise say, that according to those
 “Scriptures, the Will of the Devil is more
 “effectual than that of *God*. *God wills that*
 “*all Men should be saved*; Nevertheless, there
 “are few that endeavour it: The Devil will-
 “ing that all Men should be damned. There
 “are an innumerable Many. Amongst the
 “Multitude of the Inhabitants of the Earth,
 “the Roman Catholicks only can be saved, if
 “from these you subtract the *Jews*, hidden
 “Hereticks, Atheists and Blasphemers, Simo-
 “nists, Adulterers and Sodomites, *all which*
 “*shall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven*, scarce
 “can you then find one in a Million. In like
 “manner, under the Law of *Moses*, all the
 “Universe was under the Power of the Devil:
 “The *Hebrews* only excepted, that adored the
 “true *God*, which were Inhabitants of a small
 “Tract, not exceeding the extent of the Island
 “of *Great-Britain*, and who even also often
 “forsook his Worship; nay, when they most
 “stoickly adhered to it, they were yet tor-
 “mented by the Devil: It is thus (adds he)
 “that Blasphemer argued.

Mr. Bayle
 has illustra-
 ted this
 profane pa-
 rallel.

Take the trouble, Sir, to read over again the
 Article concerning *Xenophanes* in the *Historical and*
Critical Dictionary, and you'll see this difficulty
 illustrated. Mr. Bayle makes use of all his Rhetorick,
 and without having read our Atheist, as
 it

it appears by his Quotations, he falls exactly into *Vanini's* Method of Reasoning. "My other Observation" * (says he at the End of his Harangue) is yet more decisive. The Catholics and Protestants agree in this, that there are very few but will be damned. They save but the Orthodox who live well and repent of their Sins at the point of Death: They do not deny but an habitual Sinner may be saved in case of a good Death-Bed Repentance; but yet they maintain, that nothing is more scarce than such a Repentance. According to that then it is evident, that for one Man saved, there may be a Million damned: *Vanini's* Expression exactly. *Vix è mille millibus unus electus aderit*". I can assure you Sir, this Article gave no small trouble to the Commissaries of the Consistory of Rotterdam, who were appointed for the Examination of the Dictionary, as may be seen by their Registers. Consider also, that *Vanini* no sooner has given the Poison, but he administers the Antidote, and answers as well as he could to the Libertines Argument. But in the Article of *Xenophanes*, there is not the least answer attempted to that Objection, although it is urged with all the Strength and Eloquence the Author was capable of. In the mean time, this Objection is the same as that of moral Evil and physical Evil, considered both together as a necessary Consequence of the former.

I shall then at once answer (to *Vanini* and all others who are deceived by this Illusion) that

* Historical and Critical Dictionary in the Article of *Xenophanes* Pas. 3037. col. 2. the difficulty, which is but short in *Vanini*, is there at large, the Author employing two Columns and a half in illustrating it, and I think, with more pains than any other part of the Dictionary.

An answer to *Vanini* and all others dazl'd with this Objection.

God is always the supream Power and Master; although he suffers the Devil to act at some times, and that it is both consistent with his Majesty and Perfections so to do: That it is not true, it was contrary to the Will of God, that *Adam* and *Eve* fell, since he permitted it should be so. He created them free, and conformable to that Freedom they were to Act: That it is false that all Nations except the Jews only, were under the Dominion of Satan; and that it is yet more false, the *Jews* were unhappy, even when they acted according to the Will of their Maker: That it is absurd to say the Devil contrived the Death of the Son of God, which is evidently demonstrated in the Gospels, by our Saviour's rejecting the Advice of St. *Peter*, as the Temptation of an Evil Spirit, and his Declaration of that *being his Hour and power of Darknests* signifying no more than that a liberty was given to the Prince of Darknests, as that to *Pilate*, *Thou shouldst have no power over me* (says he to him) *were it not given unto thee from God!* Further it should be considered, it is both rash and unreasonable to determine as some do, that of a Million of People there will be scarce one saved; that if God wills that all Men shall be saved, it must be understood that that must be in a manner conformable to his Wisdom and worthy of the Cause of Virtue: And if he wills there shall be few, it is to manifest the excellency and dignity of such a Salvation; and in short, that it is absurd and imprudent to determine without a positive certainty that the Number damned will be greater than the Number saved, since at his Pleasure God can annihilate the Devil and all his Conquests; and in the remaining duration of the World encrease the Number of the

the Elect by the conversion of the Hereticks, Jews, Turks and Idolators, according to his Predictions, as the Sand of the Sea.

XLIII. I have already told you Sir, *Vanini's* ^{*Vanini ridicules the taking up of Elias and rails at the Immortality of the Soul.*} Opinion concerning the Immortality of the Soul, you may see it here above, at the eighth Chapter, where I speak of *Pomponatius* and *Cardanus*. Our Author copies from them both in his *Amphitheatre* and *Dialogues*. He openly ridicules the taking up of *Elias* into Heaven, who cast himself down, he says, in some Precipice to impose upon the People, and make them think he was suddenly taken up by God. It is true, he quotes this here as from *Cardanus*: But repeats it as his own, and after having spoken of *Moses* and *Elias*, of which the Atheists have the same Thought, this is the Transition he adds: But let us abandon those trifling Tales; *quæso mittamus has negacissimas abellas* *.

Notwithstanding *Alexander* is not yet satisfy'd; and intreats his beloved Master to explain to him his Opinion, about the Soul's Immortality, to which † *Vanini* answers, that he desired to be excused from so doing; why says *Alexander*? Because (replies the other) I ^{*He does not love the Germans.*} have vowed not to trouble myself about that Question until I become old, rich, and a German. I must tell you, it is observable he never loved that Nation, using them very freely in the whole of his Dialogues. But had he lived in our Days, and had the advantage ^{*Defence of the German Nation.*} of knowing them better, I doubt not but he would have changed his Tone. Good Sense and Virtue are Qualifications belonging to all Nations. The late Queen of *Prussia* and her

* Dial. I.

† Dial. p. 492.

Mother the Princess *Sophia* Electress Dowager of *Hanover*, of whom we mourn the loss, are perpetual Monuments to vindicate the worth of their Nation, in opposition to all indiscreet Reflections of Strangers. Father *Bouhours*, a *French* Jesuite, asked in one of his Dialogues, if a *German* could be a Man of Sense? But a *German* in return, asked, if a *Frenchman* could have Judgment? In short, the Conduct of *Vanini* was very imprudent, since *Bassompierre*, the Hero of his Dedication was a *German*, and moreover, a Man exceeding compleat and knowing.

Heridicules
the Laws
of *Moses*.

XLIV. He proceeds with absurd witticisms upon the Law of *Moses*: He tells us he does not love Hogs-Flesh, and for fear of scandalizing the *Jews*, he seldom or never eats any: Often he seems to insinuate that their Law-Giver, forbade it only out of Policy, it being very pernicious to the Leprosy; a distemper they had brought with them out of *Egypt*, and which, even now, it is pretended they are much subject to. He likewise tells us the observation of those different Degrees of proximity in Marriage is mere human Invention: And further affirms, that were the nighest Relations to marry they would so relish the sweets of it, that it would render them incapable of any other Occupation, and that as to the Crime he can find none. Moreover, that the antient Patriarchs did lay with their nighest Relations, and even to this Day it is practised amongst the *Persians* †. You see he makes quick Work and dispatches it in few Words. He thinks *Moses* acted wisely to establish Sword-in-hand, a new Religion, since all other Forgers of Sects that

* Dial. p. 46.

† Dial. p. 328.

did not go that way to work have perish'd.
But let us see what he says against the Christian Religion, because I am almost tired of tracing such gross Impieties.

XLV. According to him it is founded in Sim-
plicity. The Original of the Scriptures are lost; there is nothing certain in the Gospels: Its Promises and Threatnings have no relation to this Life, but that which is to come; therefore not to be minded. The Miracles of *J. Christ*, are like unto those of *St. Anthony*, and *St. Dominick*, and likewise not to be heeded *. As to the Martyrs for it, that proves nothing, since Vain Glory and Melancholy (not Evidence, and a sincere Conviction) were the Reasons of their Suffering. †* Besides, have not all Religions (*Jewish, Mahometans, Roman Catholicks, and Calvinists*) had their Confessors and Martyrs. Read (says he) the Reign of *Mary Queen of England*, and you'll see how many Protestants dar'd Death for their Religion. If Christians are so firm in their Persuasions, it is because *St. Paul* has had cunning enough to represent to them Marriage, as a Sacrament, and an Image of the Union of *J. Christ* with his Church: And is not that sufficient to produce a stubborn Faith **? He thinks there is a good Reason for the same Apostle's having foretold an Antichrist, and his describing him with such scandalous Marks, since, upon considering his Character, no body will be willing to apply it to himself; so that Christianity will triumph, and remain safe ‡. He also complains, that *St. Paul* should have prophecy'd of that Antichrist as near his Time; since there was then past, in his Days, XVI Centuries: † And that Prediction was not yet

His Thoughts concerning the Christian Religion.

And its Martyrs:

He profanes *St. Paul's* Comparisons about Marriage.

And on the Antichrist.

* See above, § 32. †* Dial. p. 357. ** Dial. 357
‡ Dial. L. † Dial. *ibid*.

accomplish'd. He forgets those same Protestants of which he just now spoke; and he will not remember that they have always esteem'd the Pope as such. From St. Paul he passes over to Jesus Christ, of whom he relates some of his Answers, ridiculing them by his execrable Irony: *Sapientissima hæc sunt Christi acta* *! This is the great Wisdom of Christ! But it is objected, that Christ offer'd himself voluntarily to Death: Which he would not certainly have done, had he not been convinced of the Truth of his Mission. Ay, † (says Vanini, personating an Atheist) it is the part of a wise Man, to despise transient and short Pains, to acquire an immortal Name. This is the Impiety which he boasts of having refuted, in his *Book of the Contempt of Glory*. †* Upon the Mystery of the Eucharist he is likewise profane, advising Mariners, or Seafaring Men, which are generally more subject to Passion than others, to partake often of that Holy Sacrament, as an assur'd Lenitive for their *atra biliarious* Humours.

His Opinion about the Gift of Tongues which the Apostles were endowed with.

XLVI. Upon the Gift of Tongues, which the Apostles were endow'd with on *Whitsunday*, he revives the ancient Accusation of the *Jews*; and for a farther Illustration of it, makes use of certain *Plutonick* Notions, which he derides in his *Amphitheatre*. § He says our Souls possess in themselves the Knowledge of all Languages and Sciences, since they are deriv'd from the Deity himself, and partake of his Essence: But being depress'd by the Weight of material Bodies, they find much the same Resistance in the Exertion of their Strength, as a quick Fire close cover'd with Ashes. So that the Fire of our Understandings shou'd be

* Dial. L.

+ Dial. *ibid.*

+* See above, *Ch.* 21.

§ Dial. LIV. p. 408.

stir'd up, if we would have those thick and gross Humours dissipated, and bright and pure Light shine forth: That therefore all our Knowledge is but a kind of Memory, as *Plato* observ'd. This being laid down, he adds, that when there is a quick Ebullition of the Humours, there results a vehement Agitation of the Spirits, which being convey'd with Rapidity to the Brain, drives out as it were the Knowledge of those different Tongues, which are there hidden, just as the Blow of one Flint Stone, makes a Spark of Fire fly out of the other. That it is known from Experience, that during the Dog-days, a Person attack'd with a violent Fever, speaks often Words of different Tongues; and that Persons having drank plentifully of good Wine, from stupid insipid Companions, become eloquent and agreeable. This Line of *Horace* is not forgot *.

Fecundi Calices quem non fecere disertum:

That in *Thracia* there was a Temple consecrated to *Bacchus*, the Priests of which never pronounced their Oracles, until they had their Bellies well fill'd with that God which they there ador'd—— Here is a great Preparation our Author makes, but to what will it terminate? Why, to a gross Impiety: “For therefore (adds he) the antient Philosophers hearing the Apostles speak in different Languages, tax'd them with Drunkenness; as *St. Luke*

* *Horace*, Epist. 5. Book 1.

*Quid non Ebrietas designat? operta recludit
Spes jubet esse ratas, in praelia trudit inermem,
Sollicitis animis onus eximit, addocet artes.
Fecundi Calices quem non fecere disertum?*

“ tells us in the Second Chapter of the *Acts* of
 “ the Apostles.” But behold his Honesty. It is
 probable there was not one Philosopher amongst the Crowd of Strangers of which St. *Luke*
 speaks. They were Men fearing God, who
 embrac’d Christianity, making a just amends
 to the Apostles. And where does he discover,
 (I would feign know) that Wine inspires us
 with the Knowledge of Tongues, and makes
 Men speak such noble things of God, and in
 such a manner as to attract Admiration? As
 for me, I confess, I have known a great Num-
 ber of Drunkards, of all sorts, which yet could
 speak but their Mother Tongues.

XLVII. As to the Resurrection of the Dead,
 and the many Examples shewn him of its Possi-
 bility, he ridicules the one and the other; and
 not only the Christians, but even the Pagans, who
 believed that Doctrine, and seemingly attacks the
 latter, with a View to be more severe on the
 former. * “ *Lucian* would answer us, (says
 “ he) That all those little Stories have been
 “ invented by some trifling Liars among the
 “ *Greeks*, or hypocritical *Platonicks*, throwing
 “ them as a Mist before the Eyes — — but
 “ (says *Alexander*) *Plato* has maintain’d the Im-
 “ mortality of the Soul against many Philoso-
 “ phers. It is true, (replies the other) but he
 “ has likewise held for the Immortality of the
 “ Soul of that little Bird you see in that Cage.
 “ Was not *Socrates* (replies *Alexander*) a Man
 “ of great Probity? Yes, says *Vanini*, but he
 “ taught that in a Republick, it was necessary
 “ the Vulgar should be kept to their Duty by
 “ fabulous Prodigies. *Alex.* Nevertheless he
 “ died chearfully, in defence of Truth, def-

* Dial. LVII.

“ pising the Worship of false Gods. *Vanini*.
 “ I cannot think that it was out of Zeal to-
 “ wards Religion; but perhaps to avoid the
 “ Contempt which the fear of Death might
 “ have drawn upon him, in an Age when
 “ Strength of Mind and Constancy were so
 “ much admir’d.” Thus it is that unworthy
 Pedant vilifies an illustrious Philosopher. We
 shall see anon, how mindful he is of that excel-
 lent Morality, when he is himself in Prison.
 What (he adds) is yet more worthy the In-
 dignation of all true Friends to *Socrates*, as I
 esteem my self, judging of the Disposition of
 that great Man by his own. He says, perhaps
 the Inquisitors of the *Areopagus* would not listen
 to his Recantation. ’Tis thus he casts a Slur
 upon a glorious Life, crown’d with a no less
 heroick Death, altho’ he knows ’tis what none
 of the Antients ever pretended to, and which the
Epicureans, and other Enemies to him and *Plato*,
 would never have forbore urging against them,
 had there been the least Shadow of Truth in it.

A false
Suggestion
against *Soc-
rates*.

Politickly speaking, Atheists should not stop
 at such like Conjectures, for if that Method
 should happen once to be in use, ’tis then Chri-
 stian Philosophers may sufficiently annoy them
 with whole Volleys of Perhaps’s, and that so
 effectually, as to blemish their most specious
 and innocent Actions: And, in short, to con-
 sider it well, Conjecture for Conjecture, upon
 whom can they more naturally fall? On Men
 persuaded of the Existence of a supreme God,
 Witness and Judge of our secret Thoughts and
 Actions, who has in his Power only the Right
 of Rewarding or punishing; or on those who
 thinking themselves Independants in Nature, and
 empower’d to trample under foot Religion op-
 press’d, have shaken off the Burthen of a pre-
 tended

Impru-
dence of
atheistical
Conjec-
tures.

tended Governor, and thus qualify'd themselves to satisfy, without the least Remorse, their favourite Passions, tho' perhaps not always those conspicuous and open, as Gluttony, Drunkenness, and Wantonness, &c. But yet such which are not less pernicious and destructive to Society, tho' often hidden, as Pride, Malice, Contempt, Anger, Vengeance, and Perfidiousness.

Vanini believes neither Genius's, Dæmons, nor Oracles.

XLVIII. *Vanini*, after having, in this manner, calumniated *Socrates*, ridicules the good and evil Genius's. He examines the Question concerning Dæmons and Oracles. As to the former, he believes there are no such Beings; and condemns *Plato* for having introduc'd them without Testimony. * There are no Reasons (says he) to convince us that there are either good or evil Genius's, either beyond, or on this side the Moon; it is mere human Fancy hath invented them. But says *Alexander*, there are Magicians, and Necromancers, that bewitch People. *Il credere é di cortesia*, to believe that is only out of good manners, answers *Vanini*. But that they perform any thing by "the Mediation of Devils, I cannot think, "since I believe the Existence of Devils but by "the Persuasions of Religion: But I had rather ascribe those Effects to natural Causes."

Alexander, not yet satisfied, asks how the *Egyptian* Magicians wrought so many Prodigies before *Pharao*: But this Difficulty does not puzzle our *Vanini*. "Those Philosophers (says he) "which deny the Existence of Dæmons, despise "the *Hebrew* Annals. *Cardanus*, nevertheless, "tells us, it is very probable that those Impostors, by the vehement Strength of their "desiring Frogs, brought the Taste of them into

“ their Mouths, and that the Spittle thereof produced those Creatures. For, adds that profound Naturalist, as we find that in Summer, from a Drop of Water, is brought forth a Frog, why, in like manner, may they not come forth from the Spittle; so much the rather, since it is assisted with the Powers of the Soul.” I assure you, Sir, that *Vanini*’s Book is full of such wretched Nonsense, and it is such Trash, we dearly buy and study: The same time we neglect the Reading and Meditation of Numbers of much more excellent Things.

Our Atheist is more reasonable in speaking of the heathenish Oracles: First he applies them to the Devils, then he attributes them to Vapours of the Earth, after that to the Concurrence of the Stars; and lastly, after having reason’d thus at random, he falls in with the Opinion of the late Mr. *Vandale*, who imagin’d them nothing else than the Effects of Illusion and Imposture. You know, Sir, this Opinion is not new. The *Epicureans* constantly ridicul’d them. *Chrysippus* * compil’d a large Volume of them; but *Cicero* divided all their pretended divine Answers into four Classes, as he tells us, towards the End of his Second Book of *Divination*.

Opinions concerning the Pagan Oracles.

That of *Chrysippus*.
That of *Cicero*.

“ But now I come unto thee,

“ *Divine Apollo, who didst dwell on Earth below,*
“ *To cause the fatal Voice of Priestesses to flow.*

“ for *Chrysippus* hath fill’d a large Volume concerning your Oracles, some, as I believe, false, and others fortuitously become true, as it often happens in common Portents, the

* *Cicero de Divinat. Lib. 2, Ch. 56.*

others

“ others so confus’d and obscure, that the In-
 “ terpretation doth want another Interpreter to
 “ unfold, and even the Chance itself another
 “ Chance; and again, others so ambiguous,
 “ that we should refer them to an able Logici-
 “ an to understand them. As that set forth to
 “ one of the most opulent Kings of *Asia*.

*Cræsus crossing the Halys, shall overthrow a
 mighty Power.*

That of
Lucian.

The Pri-
 mitive
 Christians.

Vanini.

Of Father
Tomassin.

*M. Van-
 dale.*

He thought indeed, he should overthrow the Power of his Enemies, but he was overthrown himself. *Cicero* mentions many others, which must have ruin’d the Credit of *Apello*. *Lucian*, who has wrote since, laugh’d at the whole Paganish System of Religion, not excepting even their Oracles. The Primitive Christians, tho’ sufficiently knowing in the Arguments of *Cicero* and *Epicurus*, without greater Inquiry into the Rise and Origin of those Foretellers of Fate, chose rather to attribute them to the Power of the Devil, than to the Imposition of the Priests, because, by so doing, they had a better Opportunity of exalting the Power of Christ and his Gospel, which, maugre the Devil and his Superstition, establish’d itself over all his Empire. *Vanini*, who rejected the Gospel, holds the Opinions of *Epicurus* and *Lucian*, and treats the others as Cheats and Illusions. Father *Tomassin*, who perfectly understood antient heathenish Antiquity, thought that the true Religion would suffer no great Loss, by allowing that those pretended divine Oracles were nothing else than Imposture; this he tells us plainly, in his *Method of studying the Poets in a Christian manner* *. Mr. *Vandale*, Physician at *Hawlem*,

* See his Words in Chap. 1. Book 2. of that Treatise, and which Mr. *De Fontenelle* quotes in the Preface to his *Hist. des Oracles*.

and an Anabaptist, was the first among the Moderns who dar'd break the Ice, and by a design'd Treatise, deprive the Devil of the Credit of those Oracles he had, during Christianity, so long enjoy'd. You may find an Abstract of his Book, in the First Volume of *Nouvelles de la Rep. des Lettres*, wrote by Mr. Bayle. Mr. Fontenelle, found it so well stored with Erudition and good Reasoning, that he has not thought it unworthy of illustrating and beautifying it in the *French* Tongue, as may be seen in his *Hist. des Oracles*, which has now been published above twenty eight Years, and which affords that Satisfaction in Reading, that a Person, even of a contrary Opinion, must be pleased with it. One would have thought that after so long and universal an Approbation of that excellent Treatise, it was attacking the common Sentiments of all Men, and exposing himself to an undoubted defeat in pretending to find fault with it. Notwithstanding Father Baltus a Jesuit of *Strasbourg* did not mind its established Reputation, but being full of the Writings of the *Fathers*, he could not suffer the least Attempt should be made to combat Opinions, which they so clearly embraced, and which appears in them as the chief Glory of the Christian Faith: He has therefore dedicated to Mr. de Fontenelle himself, a reply to his *Hist. des Oracles*, in which he gravely and seriously endeavours to refute him, placing him at variance with all the Christian Antiquity, and even his own Church, which hath adopted from thence what Notions she thought convenient. Mr. de Fontenelle, then employed with his *Histoire de l'Academie Royale*, did not think fit to interrupt the study of Nature, and the annals of his Academy, to examine

M

the

the reasoning and quotation of the Jesuit; and which would have brought him again in a Path he had forsaken on account of its Cragginess. Upon which a Friend of *Le Clerc's* undertook his Defence in the thirteenth Volume of his *Bibliothèque choisie*, without yet adopting every one of our Academick's Notions. Father *Baltus* answers this anonymous Author by a *Defence of his former Reply*, which is not less learned than the Reply itself; but which Mr. *Le Clerc* has not found more persuasive. The Controversy thus stopped, and Mr. *de Fontenelle* thought it sufficient to return his Apologist thanks, in a Letter to Mr. *Le Clerc*, wrote about four or five Years since; and in which I have been informed were these Words: *If Father Baltus (says he) will believe the Veracity of the Pagan Oracles he is at Liberty: As for me I have turned my Studies another way.* I imagine Sir, such a short History of this Subject might be acceptable to you on account of the great concern you take in the Republick of Letters. I now resume the Thread of my Discourse, and return to *Vanini's* Impieties, on which I have a few Words more to offer.

XLIX. Upon the duration of Religions he is altogether extravagant; he has again recourse to the wild fancies of *Astrologers* *. He says, " That the Stars after many Years approaching one another form Constellations, which have a wonderful influence on subterranean Things, and produce extraordinary Effects; Mens Wills alter; their Imaginations grow warm and their Understandings disordered. Whence happens that a skillful Man, greedy of divine Honours, foreseeing

* Dial. lii.

“ the Event, declares himself a Prophet sent
“ from *God*, and arrogates to himself many
“ Wonders, which are the bare result of the
“ Conjunction of the Stars; and thus the Vul-
“ gar being deluded, admire and adore him.
“ And those natural Effects they give the
“ Name of Miracles, although in fact, they
“ do not surpass the power of Nature. Now
“ therefore (says he) I can answer to the
“ Question, for Oracles have ceased because
“ they once begun; and according to my fore-
“ going Suppositions, whatever beginneth
“ must end: Now it cannot end, if there do
“ not happen contrary Dispositions; so after
“ Oracles the Law, their opposite, is come, and
“ Oracles will again flourish among our later
“ Successors”. It is just the same System we
have mentioned above, and which reminds me
of a Conversation I had about ten Years ago
with Mr. *Bayle*. I desired him he would in-
form me, which he thought the most formida-
ble Objections that had been urged against the
Christian Religion, because I was willing to
be sufficiently provided before-hand against
whatever might put a stop to the Faith of a
Philosophical Mind. The reply of that learned
Man, was much the same with what is here
above recited. He told me, that many famous
and learned Physicians, who had studied all
their Lives Astronomy, after so long and close
a Meditation, had concluded, that there hap-
pened in the World, from time to time, very
extraordinary and (according to their Princi-
ples) necessary Revolutions, which rendered
Men more susceptible of Religion at one time
than another. I found some Years after in
reading *Cardanus* and *Vanini*, whence that fa-
mous Critick had taken that Objection; and

Atheists
make a
handle of
any thing,
and by that
contradict
themselves

which otherwise he did not seem to value much. I am persuaded, that in the main *Vanini* did not lay great stress upon it. But it is natural for Unbelievers to make an advantage of any thing. They borrow from all Systems, whatever may make their Cause appear specious, though even in their Souls they ridicule those very Systems, and on other Occasions utterly explode them. We have already seen how *Vanini* laughs in his *Dialogues*, at those Principles he has laid down in his *Amphitheatre*. *Celsus* the *Epicurean*, became a *Platonick*, when he attacked Christianity: Our Atheist doth the same, when he reviles the Apostles, or attempts to refute their Disciples. *Spinosa* loved to pass for a *Cartesian*: His followers make use of the same Veil in order to destroy *Freedom*, and introduce a stoical *Fatality*. *Leenhoff*, formerly Minister at *Luvole*, and now deposed, made use of it likewise in his *Paradise on Earth*. I take heed of putting Mr. *Bayle* in the List of those Gentlemen, although the same variation hath happened to him sometimes. When he attacked the literal Sense of those Words of the Gospel, *oblige them to come in*, he laid down for Principle the first axioms of natural Reason, and thence gave the Inquisitors deadly blows, but afterwards having in view other Enemies, he declared for *Pyrrhonism*, against the certainty of Reason, and undertook to silence her Presumptuousness, by a simple *Dialepsis* of the Scepticks. In another place he makes use of Arguments drawn from both Philosophy and Religion in favour of Liberty, against Mr. *Saurin*. But again, he denies that liberty and disguises it in agreeable Imagination destitute of Reality. And if it be objected to him, that Atheism destroys all Vir-
tue

tue, not only in making every thing material,
 but also fatal and necessary; What doth he do?
 He retires under the Protection of the Synod
 of *Dortrecht*, and there having fixed himself,
 he dares the Attacks of the Orthodox. "If
 "any one (says he to his Protestant Calvi-
 "nist) should object, that neither your Words
 "nor Actions were congruous to the principle
 "of absolute Predestination and irresistible
 "Necessity which moves the Will, what
 "would you answer him Sir? With good
 "Arguments; but which might many of them
 "serve the turn of a *Spinofite*, if you did re-
 "proach him that the care he takes of his
 "Person, Family and Wealth, was not agree-
 "able to his System.

L. "Time (says our Atheist) as to that
 "motion which the eternal Mover will never
 "cease to impress on the World, is Eternal:
 "So that whatever has ended by the Course
 "of the Celestial Motions, will certainly ap-
 "pear again, by a periodical Return, not in
 "the same Individuals, as *Plato* hath dreamed,
 "but only in the same Specie. This is (adds
 "he, after advancing perfect Materialism) the
 "Rudiments of our subtile Philosophy, which
 "bring forth all those Wonders; but in com-
 "plaisance to the Christian Faith, I utterly
 "detest, and I have tacitly condemned them
 "before I proposed them as the subject of
 "Conversation".

LI. The Conclusion is answerable to the o-
 ther parts of the Book; he complains of the
 uncertainty and vanity of Arts, and *Alexan-*
der endeavours in vain to comfort him with
 the Thoughts of the Glory he had obtained
 in such youthful Years. And what have I more
 of it than that, says *Vanini*? But after all, he com-
 forts

He Jests
 with Re-
 putation. forts himself likewise, though in such a pro-
 fane manner, that his inward Sentiments are
 easily perceived. “ If my Soul (says he) shall
 “ perish with my Body, as the Atheists think,
 “ what pleasure can arise to it from Fame?
 “ Perhaps with the fine Names of Glory and
 “ Reputation, it may be carried with less
 “ trouble to the Grave. If on the contrary,
 “ as we hope and willingly believe my Soul
 “ shall not perish, but will fly to some upper
 Of heaven “ Region, it will there enjoy such ravishing
 “ and agreeable Pleasures, that it will esteem
 “ as nothing, the splendid and illustrious pomp
 Of Purga- “ and glory of the World. If it descends to
 tory. “ the flames of Purgatory, those Prayers *Dies*
 “ *Ira, dies illa*, so pleasing to weak Women,
 “ will be much more welcome to it, than the
 Of Hell. “ most florid Rhetorick of *Tully*, or the most
 “ subtile Arguments of *Aristotle*; or if (which
 “ *God* forbid) it should be delivered to the
 “ flames of the dark *Tartarus*, no comfort or
 “ pleasure, no deliverance can ever happen”.
 Alexander, dazled with such Thoughts, is angry
 with himself he had them not inculcated in him
 from his tender Infancy. Would to *God* (says
 he) that from my Youth I had set out with
 these Principles! *Julius* answers him with this
 fine Reflection. *Think not* (says he) *on past E-*
 vils, take no heed of future ones and shun those pre-
 sent. Alexander nevertheless Sighs for the loss
 of his youthful Age. Upon which *Julius* ask-
 ing him the Reason, he answers, *It is because*
 (says he) *I remembered that beautiful Passage in*
 Amintas.

*Perduto é tutto il Tempo
 Che in amar non si spende.*

an excellent Conclusion for a Priest and Philosopher, who presently after adds, that he submits all his Thoughts to the Judgment of the Pope and the Church.

LII. I leave you to imagine Sir, what the Conversation might be of one, who filled his Books with so much Epicurianism, and that of the most gross sort. It appears by the Evidence of several Authors, that he was not accused at *Thoulouse*, for his Writings, although perhaps they helped to determine his Judgment; which shews us his Conversation must have been rather worse than they, since it was that which really occasioned his Ruin. Here follows what *Gramond* tells us concerning him, almost at the same time, by order of Parliament, “ was condemned to die, at *Thoulouse*, *Lucilio Vanini*, who was esteemed an arch Heretick by several; but whom I always looked upon as an Atheist; for I think a Man that denies the existence of *God*, deserves the latter rather than the former Title. This wretched Fellow pretended to be a Physician, but in reality was no other than a Deceiver of Youth, who generally are imprudent and inconsiderate. He laughed at whatever was sacred or religious: He abominated the Incarnation of *Christ*, and denied the Being of *God*, esteeming all Things to be made by Chance: He adored Nature as a fruitful Mother and first Cause of all Beings, which was his greatest Error, and whence all the others derived, and which he had the boldness stubbornly to teach in a place so holy as *Thoulouse*. He presently had a great Number of Followers, amongst those that just came from the Universities, and who being in their youthful Years, were more susceptible

“ tible of new Opinions. Having been born
 “ in *Italy*, he begun his Studies at *Rome*, and
 “ applied himself with Success to those parti-
 “ cular Branches, *Philosophy* and *Divinity*; but
 “ falling in Impiety and a despising of Holy
 “ Things, he blemished his religious Charac-
 “ ter by an infamous Book, intituled, *Of the*
 “ *Secrets of Nature*; in which he had the im-
 “ pudence to assert, that Nature was the God-
 “ dess of the Universe. Having retired into
 “ *France* on account of a Crime, of which he
 “ had been accused in *Italy*, he came at last to
 “ *Thoulouse*. There is not a Town in *France*
 “ where the Laws are framed with greater
 “ severity against Heresy, and although the
 “ *Edict of Nants* hath granted to the Calvinists,
 “ an open Liberty of Trade between them
 “ and us, nevertheless those *Sectaries* have
 “ not dared to trust themselves in this Place,
 “ which is the Reason it is the only one in all
 “ *France* free from this Pestilential Heresy.
 “ No Person is admitted a Citizen, whose Faith
 “ is the least suspected by the *Holy See*. *Vanini*
 “ concealed himself for some time, until *Vain-*
 “ *Glory* induced him to treat some My-
 “ steries of the Catholick Church Proble-
 “ matically, and afterwards he derided them
 “ openly: The young Men were at first struck
 “ with great Admiration, being weak enough
 “ generally to esteem those Things which have
 “ but few Approvers. They valued whatever
 “ he said; they imitated and followed him.
 “ Being accused of corrupting the Youth, he
 “ was cast into Prison. He behaved at first as
 “ a Catholick, and feigned to be Orthodox;
 “ which put back the Punishment he deserved.
 “ He was even just a going to be set at Li-
 “ berty on account of the ambiguity of the
 “ Proofs

First hid-
den at *Tou-*
louse.

Afterward
profane,
and admir-
ed, and fol-
lowed by
the young
Men.

Hypocrite.

“ Proofs against him. When *Franconi*, a Man
 “ of Fortune, and great Merit, as this one
 “ Circumstance sufficiently testifies, depos’d,
 “ That *Vanini* had often denied, in his Pre-
 “ sence, the Existence of God, and scoff’d at
 “ the Mysteries of the Christian Religion, they
 “ brought together the Accus’d and the Accu-
 “ ser; and this latter maintain’d what he had
 “ advanc’d. *Vanini* was brought before the Se-
 “ nate, and being seated on the Stool, was
 “ asked, What were his Thoughts concerning
 “ the Existence of God? He answer’d, *That*, A feign’d
 Confession
 of Vanini’s,
 concerning
 Religion.
 “ *with the Church, he ador’d a God in Three Persons;*
 “ *and thus Nature evidently demonstrated the Being of*
 “ *a Deity.* “ And having perceiv’d, by chance,
 “ a Straw on the Ground, he took it up, and
 “ stretching forth his hand with it, he spoke to
 “ his Judges as follows. *This Straw obliges me*
 “ *to confess there is a God — —* and having end-
 “ ed his Discourse about a Providence, he ad-
 “ ded, *this Grain being cast in the Earth, appears,*
 “ *at first, to be destroy’d, and whitens; then it be-*
 “ *comes green, and shoots forth, out of the Earth,*
 “ *insensibly growing: The Dew assists its springing*
 “ *up, and Rain gives it yet a greater Strength:*
 “ *It is furnish’d with Ears, of which the Points*
 “ *keep off the Birds. The Stalk rises, and is co-*
 “ *ver’d with Leaves; it becomes yellow, and rises*
 “ *higher: A little after it withers until it dies:*
 “ *It is Thrash’d; and the Straw being separated*
 “ *from the Corn, this latter serves for the Nourish-*
 “ *ment of Men, and the former is given to Ani-*
 “ *mals, created for Mens Use.* He concluded
 “ from all this, that God was the Author of
 “ all Things. For to answer an Objection,
 “ which might be made, *That Nature was the*
 “ *Cause of these Productions,* he took again his
 “ Grain of Corn, and returning to his Author,

Found
guilty, and
condemn'd
as an Infi-
del.

“ son’d thus. *If Nature hath produc’d this*
 “ *Grain, who hath produced that Grain which pre-*
 “ *ceded this? If that be also produc’d by Na-*
 “ *ture, let us consider its Foregoer, and thus go to*
 “ *the very first, which must necessarily have been*
 “ *created, since there can be imagin’d no other Cause*
 “ *of its Production.* He very amply prov’d after-
 “ wards, that Nature was incapable of crea-
 “ ting any thing; whence he concluded, that
 “ God was the Creator, and Author of all Be-
 “ ings. But all this he said through Vanity or
 “ Fear, rather than an inward Conviction.
 “ Notwithstanding, as the Proofs against him
 “ were convincing, he was, by Arrest of Par-
 “ liament, condemn’d to die, after they had
 “ pass’d a whole Six Months in preparing things
 “ for a Hearing. I saw him in the Dung-Cart,
 “ when he was carried to Execution, making Sport
 “ of a Fryar, who was allow’d him, in order
 “ to comfort and reclaim him from his Obsti-
 “ nacy. Such a momentaneous Assistance is of
 “ little use to a desperate Man. It would be
 “ better to allow those Criminals, condemn’d
 “ to die, a sufficient Interval, to the end, that
 “ they might have time to know themselves,
 “ and repent, after having thrown forth all
 “ their Rage and Indignation. In *France* they
 “ at once declare Sentence of Death to a Cri-
 “ minal; and amidst the Horror, which the
 “ Dread of the Execution causes, they carry
 “ him to it. In *Spain*, and all the rest of *Eu-*
 “ *rope*, their Method is much preferable. They
 “ allow Criminals time sufficient to appease the
 “ Horrors of Death, and expiate their Crimes
 “ by Penitence and Confession. *Vanini*, wild
 “ and obstinate, refus’d the Consolation of the
 “ Fryar accompanying him, and insulted even
 “ our Saviour, in these Words. *He sweated with*
 “ *Weak-*

“ *Weakness and Fear* (said he) *in going to suffer*
 “ *Death, and I die undaunted.* This Villain had
 “ no reason to say he died fearless. I beheld Dejected
 “ him intirely dejected, and making a very ill and ill,
 “ use of that Philosophy he so much boasted feigning
 “ of. Being ready to be executed, he had the Philo-
 “ an horrible and most wild Aspect. His sopher.
 “ Mind uneasy, and testifying, in all his Words,
 “ great Anxiety, altho’ from time to time
 “ he cried out, he died a Philosopher: But,
 “ that he departed rather like a Brute, cannot
 “ be denied. Before they set Fire to the Obstinate,
 “ Wood-Pile, he was order’d to put his Tongue refusing to
 “ out to be cut off, which he refus’d to do: put out his
 “ Nor could the Hangman take hold of it but Tongue,
 “ with Pincers, in order to perform the Execu- which they
 “ tion. There was never heard a more dread- do by
 “ ful Screech than he then gave; you would Force.
 “ have taken it for the Bellowing of an Ox;
 “ the rest of his Body was consumed by Fire,
 “ and his Ashes thrown into the Air. Such
 “ was the End of *Lucilio Vanini* (continues the
 “ Historian) that beastly Scream he gave before
 “ his Death, is a Proof of his small share of
 “ Constancy. I saw him in Prison, I saw him
 “ at the Gallows, and likewise knew him be-
 “ fore his being arrested. Given up to his Pas- Voluptu-
 “ sions, he wallowed in Voluptuousness, in ous, and a
 “ Prison he was a Catholick; he went to Exe- Libertine.
 “ cution destitute of Philosophy, and at last
 “ ended his Life raving mad. When living, he
 “ search’d very much into the Secrets of Na-
 “ ture, and rather profess’d Physick than Di-
 “ vinity, tho’ he lov’d the Title of Divine.
 “ When they seiz’d his Goods, there was found
 “ a great Toad alive, shut up in a large Cry-
 “ stal Bottle, full of Water: Upon which, he
 “ was accus’d of Witchcraft; but he answer’d,
 “ that

In Prison,
a Hypo-
cite and
Bigot.

“ that that Animal being consum’d by Fire,
“ was a sure Antidote against all mortal and
“ pestilential Diseases. He often went to the
“ Sacraments during his Imprisonment, and
“ cunningly dissembled his inward Sentiments :
“ But when he found there was no hopes of
“ escaping, he disclos’d them, and died as he
“ had liv’d.”

The *French*
Mercury
adds other
Circum-
stances.

LIII. This is all that *Gramond* says concern-
ing him, the *French Mercury* speaks more in be-
half of his Constancy; but the Author knew
but little of his Behaviour, when in Confine-
ment. And there certainly is a considerable
Difference to be made, as to the Truth of a
Fact, related by one who has it but by hearsay,
and him who was actually an Eye-Witness, as in
this Case, the latter living at *Paris*, and the
other upon the Place. Nevertheless they in the
main agree, as to the Cause of his Accusation;
and in comparing their Relations, we discover
the just Time of his Imprisonment and Execu-
tion.

His Im-
prison-
ment Nov.
1618.

His Em-
ployment
at *Tholouse*.
His Impie-
ties.

“ Year * (says the *Mercury*) was taken Prisoner,
“ in the Town of *Tholouse*, an *Italian*, a Philoso-
“ pher, very learned, who went about in Fa-
“ milies, teaching Children that were desirous
“ to understand Philosophy perfectly. He main-
“ tain’d, and taught, that our Bodies are with-
“ out Souls, and that being dead, our Being
“ was destroy’d like unto Brutes: That the
“ Blessed Virgin (O execrable Blasphemy !) had
“ had a carnal Knowledge as other Women;
“ and other Words yet more scandalous, alto-
“ gether unworthy to be related or wrote. By
“ his Eloquence, he subtilly instilled his pernicious
“ Opinions in the Minds of his private Audi-

* *Merc. fran.* Tom. V. p. 63, 64. Ann. 1619.

“tors, infomuch that they began to give ear-
 “to the Belief of that false Doctrine. But it
 “coming to the Knowledge of the Parliament,
 “they published a Decree against this new Mi-
 “nister: And he being apprehended, and que-
 “stion’d, maintain’d his Instructions were
 “Truths: Upon which he was condemn’d, and
 “his Sentence declar’d, importing, that he ^{His Sen-}
 “should make an honourary Amends in his ^{tence.}
 “Shirt, a Torch in his Hand, and drawn upon
 “a Hurdle to the Place of Execution; where
 “his Tongue being cut out, he should be
 “burn’d alive: All which was effected in the
 “beginning of *February*, † in the Place call’d
 “*la place du salin*. He died as freely, and with ^{His sup-}
 “as much Constancy and Patience as ever Man ^{pos’d Un-}
 “did. For coming out of the Prison, he joy- ^{daunted-}
 “fully and briskly uttered these Words, In ^{ness and}
 “*Italian: Let us go and die chearfully as a Philo-*
 “*sopher*. But moreover, to shew his Undaunt-
 “edness in dying, and the Despair of his Soul,
 “when he was told to call out to God for Mer-
 “cy, he spoke these Words in the Presence of
 “a thousand Spectators: *There is neither God* ^{His last}
 “*nor Devil, for was there a God, I would intreat* ^{Words.}
 “*him to consume the Parliament with his Thunder,*
 “*as being altogether unjust and wicked; and was*
 “*there a Devil, I would also pray to him to swal-*
 “*low it up in some subterraneous Place.* But since
 “there is neither the one nor the other, I can-
 “not do it.”

Mr. *la Crose* doth not rely upon the Autho-
 rity of the *Mercury*, and I think him in the
 right, the Relation of the Presidents having

† How could *Vanini* have been kept four Months in Prison,
 if he had presently confess’d his Crime, as the *Mercury* pre-
 tends.

a greater Appearance of Truth. I likewise am of Opinion, there is no great Credit to be given to this Circumstance I have already related, which is, That *Vanini*, before he was tied to the Stake, confess'd to all the Members of Parliament, that at *Naples*, he, with thirteen others of his Comrades, set out for all Parts of *Europe*, to spread the Doctrine of Atheism; and that *France* was allotted him. *Gramond* makes no mention of it, and it is not at all probable he should have forgotten such a particular Circumstance, after having related many, much more insignificant.

Vanini's
Character,
drawn
from his
Writings
and Acti-
ons.

LIV. After having given you the most certain Circumstances of the Life and Death of our Unbeliever, I must now, Sir, endeavour to give you likewise an Idea of his Character, taken, not only, from what I have said, but other Parts of his Writings.

His Body. He was of a healthful Constitution, tho' not robust, and of a mild Aspect; he was compensated sufficiently for the weakness of his Com-

His Mind. plexion (if he may be believ'd) by the Qualifications of the Mind. He had (he tells us) a great and sublime Understanding, agreeable, and of delightful Vivacity in Conversation. It is certain that he lov'd Study, and made a very con-

His Latin. siderable Progress in a few Years. His *Latin* is for the most part pure, but often times swell'd and not natural; which proceeds from an ill directed Imitation of the *Roman Orator*. We imagine commonly to have got into his Style, if we can imitate that in those eloquent Pieces which he pronounced in the Senate: But we do not take notice that this great Man thus exalted it, suitably to the Persons for whom it was intended, and that he was no less ingenious in the Simple and Diadaſtick, than in the Sublime

Sublime and Oratorical. Read his *familiar Letters*, his *Offices*, and his *Tusculanes*; his Books of the *Nature of the Gods*, but amongst the rest, all the last of *Divination*, and you will agree with me, nothing can be found more simple and precise. But *Vanini* had studied abundantly more *Cardanus* and *Averroes*, confus'd and hard Writers, than *Pliny jun.* *Quintilian*, or *Cicero*. Prejudic'd in favour of *Aristotle* and his Followers, he could relish no other than the Philosophy first taught him in his own Country, but had Understanding enough to perceive the weakness of that of *Thomas Aquinas*, and the Schoolmen: His native Religion, and the manner it is us'd, both by the People and Clergy, did not prepossess him in favour of that of *Jesus Christ*. He thought those Grimaces and Artifices, as also the Cupidity he then beheld, were from the beginning essential to the Christian Religion. Being out of conceit with the Gospel which was not suited to his Ambition, he form'd the monstrous Design to combat it where ever he could with Safety; and the more effectually to perform that, he esteem'd the shortest Method was to declare against all Religions, not excepting even that of Nature. Swell'd with the boldness of the Undertaking, this second *Epicurus* overrun the World to wage War with the Deity. And if we may believe Report, he persuaded thirteen of his Comrades to do the like also. From this one Passage of his Life one may judge of his Prudence and Wisdom. He drew upon himself a World of Enemies, equally great and powerful, both by their Authority and Characters. Alarms and Uneasiness follow'd him every where, and threw him sometimes in Disorders, which attack'd even his Intestines. *Mi-*
hi

His Philo-
sophy.

His Irreli-
gion.

His Epi-
curean and
infamous
Project.

hi (says he) *præterita pericula & timores memoria repenti alvus solvitur*. Distrust never left him, and got before him wherever he went. In vain it was he took the Stick and Bag of *Diogenes* :

His Pover- Poverty, which would have been valuable in a
ty. true Philosopher, in him became an eternal Scandal, by his spunging and flattering ways.

His Hypo- His Hypocrisy, which was so well manag'd in
crisy. his *Amphitheatre*, unmask'd itself in his *Dialogues*; and made appear a Stock of Ambition and Impiety, which were but too much confirm'd by his Deportment. Without Shame or Modesty, he represents his Father having the

His Im- Constancy of an Emperor, his Mother the Blood
modesty. of the true *Spanish* Nobility, and himself the Sentiments of a *Socrates*. But I mistake, he exalted himself a Degree higher. God forbid (says he somewhere) that *Vanini* should be reproach'd with the least Dissimulation: And notwithstanding he attributes to *Socrates* a Pusillanimity, which must have for ever defam'd him, as when he tells us, that the *Areopagus* would not give ear to his Recantation*: Would he not have done better to have strip'd himself of his pretended Courage, and have given it to *Socrates*, as justly due? Swell'd with Pride, no
His mon- Name, but that of *Julius Cæsar*, was worthy of
strousPride him: And as if the least Remnant of Christianity was burthensome to him, he denied that given him in Baptism. From the first Page of his *Dialogues*, having suffer'd himself to be sufficiently praised, both in *Greek* and *Latin*, he introduces his Interlocutor, saying, Good God! What a Loss it is for those who are depriv'd of your Conversation! *Bone Deus! quantum jacturæ sit ab iis qui te non audiunt!* Who can dis-

* See above, Chap. XLVII.

pute you the Honour of having contributed to the Improvement of Sciences! *Eja vir absque controversia de quacumque Scientia optimè merite* * !

" I will not do (says *Alexander* again) as *Thomas Morus*, who hearing *Erasmus* dispute, whom he did not know personally, said to him, You are a Devil, or *Erasmus*: But I shall thus speak of your Wisdom, Either you are a God, or *Vanini*." I am *Vanini*, replies

Julius Casar: † All his Dialogues are interspersed with such like Modesty. In one he disputes with *Solomon*, *Julius* and *Alexander*,

leaving the Stage to *Solomon* and *Vanini*. This latter scurrilously treating the former, as a bad Naturalist, and the most insipid of Moralists; whilst in return, the other praises him as the

God of true Philosophy, *Vale Philosophorum Deus* !

That is the Conclusion of the Dialogue. ‡ His whole Works, tho' but Plagiarism, yet he would have 'em thought Originals; altho' he knew

Cardanus, *Pomponatius*, *Fracaſter*, and *Scaliger* might claim whatever they contain; excepting his Profanations. We have related a sufficient

Number to judge of the Author. But there remain yet some of such Nature, which forbids their citing, because they depend upon manifest Allusions to holy Words, which we venerate, and he did not. Being as bad a Critick

as Philosopher, he explains Scripture as one that had never studied it. He thinks that

St. Mark, in saying (*Chap. vi. Ver. 5.* of his Gospel) that our Saviour could not work a Miracle in *Nazareth*, gives to understand, his Power was only Relative * ; that is to say, fallacious, fitting to dazle the Understandings of the

His Impiety concerning *Solomon*.

His Plagiarism.

His Profanations.

His wretched Criticism.

* Dial. I.

† See Dial. LIV.

‡ It is Dial. XVI.

* * Dial. p. 439.

Vulgar, in a place where he was not known ; but intirely useleſs in his own Country, where they knew what he was. Behold the Noble Deſign he attributes to an Evangelift ! Notwithſtanding that, it is that very Evangelift which demonſtrates, throughout his Goſpel, that Jeſus Chriſt is the Meſſiah, and the Son of God ; and that his Miracles are from Heaven : That if he wrought few in *Nazareth*, it was becauſe of their Unbelief, which, as it were, hinder'd him, altho' he heal'd ſome Sick, as it is obſerv'd in that Verſe quoted by our Atheiſt. Infatuated with Aſtrology, he is ſilly whenever he copies *Cardanus* and *Agrippa*, and adds the fooliſh Stories from his own Country. And what is the more particular in relation to that, is, that after he has calculated the Nativity of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, he would alſo do his own, and found it to be very unhappy. " You have taught us (ſays he to *Cardanus*, in the 25th Page of his *Amphitheatre*) that our Actions depend upon the Motion of the Cæleſtial Bodies : And how do you then maintain they are not fram'd for us ? Truly if thoſe Conſtellations are not made for us, I would not then fear *Mars*, which in the Orb preſided at my Birth." * Now *Mars* is a Planet which foretells Wars, Sufferings, and Tragick Deaths ; How then can we, after this, doubt of the Veracity of Aſtrology ? Having no Principles of Religion, not even of the Religion of Nature ; ſince he thought the World was eternal, and guided only by blind Neceſſity, we muſt not be ſurprized if his Morals were not perfectly good. I deteſt vain Accuſations ; and in relation to the Dead, I would have the moſt ſtrict Equity obſerv'd : But the poſitive Aſſertions of

His Infatuation for Aſtrology.

He calculates his own Nativity.

His Morals bad.

* *Amphit.* p. 25.

Father *Mersenne*, on the Conduct of *Vanini* in the Monastery, gives room for a strong Suspicion. Add to that the Testimony of *President Gramond*, who was in the same Place, and declares to have known him exceeding voluptuous, strengthens that Suspicion: And in short, his Dialogues, so full of Obscenity and profane Turns, renders it highly probable. He speaks of one of his Mistresses, named *Isabella*, which he stil'd his little Left Eye, and for whom he compos'd amorous Songs. This is a fine Confession for a Priest, in a Book of Religion and Philosophy! He is delighted when he speaks of Generation, doing it in such licentious Terms, that it is easily perceivable, his Heart is not very clean, since his Imagination is so polluted. He goes yet farther, and seems to approve Debauchery; for when he speaks about *Aristotle*, who receiv'd such considerable Sums from *Alexander*, for the Study of Animals, our *Alexander* confesses to his *Julius*, that as for him, he had expended his whole Estate in keeping a little Animal (he means a *Courtisana*). * *Julius* gives his Approbation, saying, That many will think he has embrac'd the best Choice. Is it then at all surprising Providence cut off this young Madman in the beginning of his Course?

Mr. *de la Crose* charitably believes, that his Imprisonment wrought a Repentance, and that he spoke to his Judges no less sincerely than orthodoxly, when he made use of the common Inferences to demonstrate the Existence of God, in shewing the Straw. I would not condemn a Judgment so charitable; and I am of his Opinion, that when things are doubtful, it is best to incline to the least disadvantageous side: But really I don't know whether this Rule can

His wanton Stile.

Opinion of Mr. *de la Crose* upon *Vanini's* retracting.

Very charitable.

be applied to a Man who lived and died as *Vanini*. I would observe again, that it did not become our *Italian* to banter *Socrates* upon his Imprisonment, and to behave so ill in his; it is thus the Reproaches he makes to others fall on himself. He sung a Recantation, but it was not thought sincere enough to be heeded. We say also, that the Parliament of *Tholouse* drove things a little too far. It is, I confess, the Interest of Princes and Republicks to suppress Impiety, when it dogmatizes, because of the fatal Consequences it may have among a Society of Christians: But I cannot tell whether that should not be moderated by Prudence. Mr. *la Crose* pretends, that a Retracting in form, as *Vanini* did, should be sufficient; there being room to renew the Prosecution if the Delinquent relapsed. *Gramond*, according to him, drops the Character of an Historian, by his harsh Method of relating the Fact. The ill Conduct and Misfortunes of Men claim always a Right to our Compassion, and which it is unjust to deny them; and though it be allowable to abominate their Excesses, as they greatly deserve, yet Humanity requires we should compassionate their Persons. But if the Severity of *Gramond* and the Parliament cannot admit of an Apology, neither I am persuaded can the last Hours of *Vanini*; and particularly his blaspheming against Jesus Christ. In that Passage only is conspicuous the most gross Hypocrisy, since he openly insults him whom he call'd upon in Prison, and of whose Sacraments he had partaken. All this should render Atheism very suspicious to us.

LV. Such was *Vanini*, as I have represented him to you, both from his own Writings, and sufficient Authority; judge then, Sir, what we must think of this Apologist, who pretends to give

Rigour of
the Parliament of
Tholouse.

Harshness
of *Gramond*.

The last
Hours of
Vanini
dreadful.

Of *Vanini*'s
Apology,
printed in
Latin at
Roterдам.

give us an entire Justification of him; in a small Latin Treatise, lately publish'd under this Title, *Apologia pro Julio Casare Vanino, Neapolitano, i. e. An Apology for Julius Caesar Vanini, a Neapolitan*: I can assure you that Piece is not seriously wrote. It is a Person of Learning who is the Author, that drew it up by way of Banter, and in order to try his Wit, in the Defence of a Bad Cause. And what is the most useful in that little Book is, That it relates both for and against, and is ample in Quotations, telling you his Authority: Moreover, that there are several Circumstances, taken notice of neither by Mr. Schramm, nor Mr. la Crose. After having briefly told us the Names, the Country, Travels, and Writings of Vanini, he answers to eighteen Heads of Accusation alledged against him, at each Particular, making some poetical or historical Observations, which are always pleasing. These following are the Eighteen Articles, with their Answers abridg'd; as the Author himself gives them at the End of his Book.

Accusations advanced against him, and the Replies of his Apologist.

1. *It is said Vanini knew not God. Which is Gramond's Expression. Deum ignorabat.*

Answ. Because he would not dive out of the Reach of his Understanding.

2. *That he brought to light again the Book intitled, Of the Three Impostors.*

Answ. Which is a Chimera.

3. *That he hath advanc'd the very Words of Atheists.*

Answ. Only to point out their Poison.

4. *That he hath answer'd them very lightly.*

Answ. Because thinking the old Answers sufficiently known, he look'd out chiefly for new ones.

5. *That he held in Execration the Humanity of Christ.*

Answ.

Answ. Calumny.

6. *That he hath accus'd the Virgin Mary of having lost her Virginity.*

Answ. A Fable.

7. *That he esteem'd Nature the only God.*

Answ. There have been many illustrious Persons call'd Gods.

8. *That he blam'd those Schoolmen who reason'd about Angels.*

Answ. He relates the Words of others.

9. *That he requir'd a physical Account of the Nature of Devils.*

Answ. Because there is much Superstition in the Opinions of the Vulgar.

10. *That he denied the Immortality of the Soul.*

Answ. No where.

11. *That he was an Astrologer.*

Answ. Very well, must he therefore be an Atheist?

12. *That he contested the future Destruction of the World by Fire.*

Answ. After his Method.

13. *That he maintain'd Fatality;*

Answ. He meant Providence.

14. *That he fancied Letters in the Heaven.*

Answ. By Superstition.

15. *That he refutes neither Cardanus nor Haly.*

Answ. Because he had already done it elsewhere.*

16. *That he laugh'd at sacred Things.*

Answ. Which, in fact, were not such.

17. *That he was rejected by the Fryars, and turn'd out of their Monastery.*

Answ. As if by that he was rejected of God.

18. *That lastly he was condemn'd to die.*

* I suppose in some of his Writings, which are destroy'd or lost; that is what the Apologist means.

Answ. As several other innocent Persons have been.

This may suffice to shew you that little Book is not seriously wrote; therefore, I do not undertake to refute it: Neither indeed is *Vanini* himself worthy of it. Let the Publick only compare this Life with that Defence, and decide accordingly.

LVI. But I cannot yet finish without speaking a word or two about Mr. *Bayle*. You know, Sir, the great esteem I have always had for his Ingenuity, and with what vehemence I have wished he would turn it to a more uniform Use, and more worthy of him. I have often been with him, but we never agreed in any Point, but disputed about every thing. I told him my Thoughts about several Parts of his Works, as I would now do were he living. So that I flatter myself no one will Reflect on me, since I take only the same Liberty now, as I would have done during his Life. It then may be allowed me to observe, that in relation to *Vanini*, Mr. *Bayle* cannot be excused for speaking about him in so neglectful a manner as he does in his *Pensées Diverses*. I immediately suppose he had in his Library *Gramond's* History, since he gives us to understand so in his *Dictionary*, at the Article concerning that *President*, and where he specifies the very Edition he makes use of. I likewise suppose he had *Parkers* Book *de Deo*, since he quotes him with Approbation, and pretty copiously. Now in the first Section of that Book, (which is the more curious, because it is an Abridgment of Atheism and Atheists, a Subject very proper in itself, to relish Mr. *Bayle's* Taste) there is found in it the very Picture of *Vanini*, and that long Passage of *Gramond*
which

which I above related at large *. It being thus, I ask, that it may be allowed me to believe, that Mr. Bayle had read in *Parker* and *Gramond*, the true Character of *Vanini*. Nay, he confesses as much himself in his *Entretiens Posthumes* against Mr. *Jaquelot*, although he gives us to understand, that it was but after the first Edition of his *Pensées Diverses*, in which he has given us a very wrong Idea of the Character and Martyrdom of *Vanini*. That's well; but yet he should have corrected that Article in the latter Edition, or at least retract it in the *Continuation*; the Subject was of sufficient Importance and Equity, which absolutely requir'd it. There is so much difference between an honest Man described, as he has done *Vanini*, and a Description of one such as is given us of the same by *Gramond*, and between a Martyr for Atheism, and a notorious *Hypocrite*, such as was our *Neapolitan*; that it was undoubtedly required of Mr. Bayle's Exactitude to make a Note at that part of his Treatise, and to let us know he had received better Information on that Subject, and besides, that all that should be amended, in the Supplement to his *Dictionary*. Had he done that, he would not have expos'd himself to the just Reproaches of Mr. *Jaquelot*, who consulted the truth of the History, and took the advantage of it in his Book, intituled, *Examen de la Theologie de Mr. Bayle*.

But after what manner is *Vanini* spoke of in that Book, intituled, *Pensées Diverses*, or *various Thoughts* †? First, he is represented as an honest Man, and afterwards as a Martyr

* See above, Ch. LII.

† *Pensées Diverses*, Tom. 1. p: 356. and following Edition of 1704.

for *Atheism*. Let us quote the Words of that celebrated Philosopher, adding thereto, some Observations which is all at present I shall do.

“ The detestable *Vanini* (says he) who was burned in the Year 1612, at *Thoulouse*, for *Atheism*, had always been pretty regular in his Morals, and whoever would have undertaken to attack him on any other Point but his Doctrine, would have run a great Risque of being accused of Calumny.

Mr. Bayle
imagines
without
foundation,
that *Vanini*
was a good
Moralist.

To judge at first Sight by the Method Mr. Bayle takes, one would think he resolved to oppress us with sufficient Authority in favour of *Vanini*. Nevertheless, contrary to his usual Custom he urges none, which appears something surprising in a Man, of that famous Critick's Character, so curious in most respects and chiefly in what relates to the History of the two last Centuries, and that of the Atheists. Was his Library so ill furnished, that he had no Book in it that made mention of *Vanini*? *Gramond*, *Father Marsenne*, *Garasse*, *Patin* and all those others which Mr. Bayle had read, did they unanimously assert, that our Neapolitan was sufficiently regular in his Morals? He should be well assured of a Fact of that Importance before laying it down as the Foundation of his Reasoning: Otherwise one may always say, that the Crimes of the Atheists have been designedly palliated, whilst care was taken with much Pains, and search to make conspicuous the Failings of those that had the least Zeal for Religion.

But this is not all, *Vanini* has been a true Martyr for *Atheism*, he openly dogmatized and maintained his Opinions to his last Breath. This is the second Illusion of Mr. Bayle. “ When “ I consider (says he) that *Atheism* has had

P

“ Martyrs,

“ Martyrs, I doubt no longer, but Atheists
 “ have a stronger Idea of Honesty imprinted
 “ on their Minds, than those of the *sweet* and
 “ *profitable*. For why did *Vanini* so indiscretely
 “ amuse himself to dogmatize before Persons
 “ who could easily bring him to Justice. If
 “ he sought but his own private Profit, he
 “ should have contented himself with a per-
 “ fect security of Conscience, without heeding
 “ to have Disciples. He must then have had
 “ the design in making them either to become
 “ the Head of the Party or to free Men from
 “ a burthen which in his Opinion hindered
 “ them from diverting themselves at their Ease.
 He supposes here Atheism has had its Mar-
 tyrs, yet he alledges but two Examples: The
 first is *Vanini*, the other a certain Fryer, whom
 Mr. *Ricaud* mentions in his *State of the Ottoman*
Empire. But of the former I hope he will allow
 us to think otherwise, since it appears from
 the positive Testimony of *Gramond*, that he
 used his best Endeavours for to save himself.
 And as to the latter who was named *Maho-*
met Effendi, we shall speak of him anon, let us
 leave him for a little while. It suffices then
 that *Vanini* is not a Martyr.

And supposing there are true Martyrs for
 Atheism, he reasons at random upon the Prin-
 ciples from whence they act; at first giving
 them a certain greatness of Soul, saying I doubt
 not but Atheists have in themselves a just
 Idea of what is honest, which is stronger in
 their Minds than that of what is profitable or
 agreeable. It is certain it must be so, since ac-
 cording to Mr. *Bayle*, they become Martyrs for
 their Cause: But if this last Proposition be
 denied, and it may be said, that Atheists may
 dogmatize in private, but do not persevere in
 their

their constancy to Martyrdom, and consequently that they have not an Idea of honesty stronger than those of what is sweet and profitable, then his Superstructure falls. Let us take for Example *Vanini*. It cannot be denied but that he was an Atheist; having but Wit and Ambition, the thirst after Glory perpetually gnawing him; Mr. *Bayle* pretends he was pretty regular in his Morals: All which makes appear there was some Idea in him of Honesty. The Question is now to know whether that Idea would have carried him to deprive himself of what was sweet and profitable, and even Life itself. But let us not Reason upon the uncertain Inclinations of his Heart, let us rather consult Facts. It is then certain, that in Mr. *Bayle's* sense what is sweet and profitable has been stronger than what is honest. For he (*Vanini*) recanted, he was a perfect Biggot in Prison, he masked himself, and remained so until he found there was no longer room for Hypocrisy. Truly if Atheism had a triumphant Blow to strike, it was in the Person of *Vanini*; an Author of thirty Years old, full of Ambition for himself and the glory of Atheism, who had buffooned *Socrates*, and solemnly declared in his Works against Dissimulation. Such a Man, or none but the like, I say, should have the Idea of Honesty to that degree, that the sweet and profitable should never efface it, or be stronger than it, especially in an occasion so decisive as this; notwithstanding his Strength failed, or more properly that of Atheism.

Mr. *Bayle* always depending upon the constancy of *Vanini* presumes this Question, *For why did Vanini (says he) so indiscreetly amuse himself to dogmatize before Persons who could easily*

ly bring him to Justice, if he sought but for his own private Profit, he should have contented himself with a perfect tranquility of Conscience without the desire of having Disciples. The word Indiscreetly, here put in, is a sufficient Answer to the Question itself, young Men being for the most part so, but especially such as *Vanini*, who overflowed with Vanity and Pride. You have seen how he praises himself in his Dialogues, and after what manner he treats *Solomon*, *St. Paul*, *Jesus Christ*; as well as the chief Articles of the Christian Faith. Notwithstanding he would not pass for an Atheist. In his Dedication to *Bassompierre*, he oppresses the Libertines with Reproaches; in his Dialogues he calls them Antechrists, and in short towards the end of his Book, he is so afraid to be attacked that he submits all to the Authority of the *Holy-See*, and recants beforehand of whatever might offend it. His Vain-Glory obliged him to dogmatize secretly, but his Self-love provided him always with a back Door to escape. Therefore as to what regards Justice, he did not mind it much, as *Mr. Bayle* imagines, as well by reason of his Character of Priest, which seemed to oblige him to submit to another Jurisdiction, as because of his Wit and Eloquence, upon which he rely'd very much, without mentioning the Difficulties on the subject of Providence, upon which he had for a long time reflected, and which he was very capable of rendring confused. But after all *Mr. Bayle* can never make me believe, that a Man so Pusillanimous as *Vanini*, hath braved a Prison, he so ill suffered. If he sought but his private profit, he should content himself with quietly enjoying a perfect security of Conscience. That would undoubtedly be the most prudent choice for an Atheist.

theist. But there are mad Men, such as *Vanini*, who cannot forbear speaking, although it be at their Peril, not that in Reality they are animated by a Principle of Charity or Honesty; but from either, that of Vain-Glory or Folly, in order to distinguish themselves from the vulgar, or murder their time in Buffooneries and merry making, Things very delightful to young People, altho well convinced of the truth of a Providence. Did Men always act according to fixed Principles be it Good or Evil, Mr. *Bayle's* Reflections would be more just. But he has abundantly shown us himself that the Actions of Men are not a necessary Consequence of their Principles. For should an Atheist dogmatize, we must not for that, believe he has in view to form a Sect, or Charity towards the Publick, no, not in the least: He speaks, argues, declares his Opinion, Jest or is Profane to divert his Friends, annoy the Clergy, or lastly to extol his great Knowledge and Penetration. And in fact he would be very sorry all Men should become Atheists.

But Mr. *Bayle* may yet thus Reply. Obstinacy is sufficient to make Men Martyrs for Atheism, as in the Case of *Mahomed Effendi*. Of *Mahomed Effendi*. But luckily this Example is the only in its kind, and therefore cannot be laid down as a Rule. Moreover, that we are intirely in the Dark concerning this pretended Martyr, and should we esteem him, such as that base Fellow who burned the Temple of *Diana*, to acquire himself a Name, should he, I say, do any thing but what would be approved of by all Men of Judgment, and even Mr. *Bayle* himself, were he now living? Then we might justly assert it was either a natural Disposition, folly or Melancholy which was the Cause of such Actions:

Actions: The Idea of Honesty having little share therein if any at all. But however, that be *Vanini's* Example is a Demonstration, that the Thing in itself is neither natural nor probable; since notwithstanding his great assistance of Youth, Knowledge, Philosophy, Ambition and many Years Experience, he miserably yielded, leaving us a living Image and perpetual Monument of the Weakness of Atheism, that is to say of Human Reason, abstracted from the Knowledge of *God*.

This Sir, is all I had to offer you upon those Reflections of *Mr. Bayle*, that concerns our Atheist, I have took care to answer them for fear of being accused of having slipped over the greatest Difficulty. I thought it better to be a little prolix and tiresome at once than have it to do a second time: So much the rather, the Subject being of the utmost Importance; and the great Name of so celebrated an Author having imposed on many. It was the Love of Truth only prompted me to those Reflections. And now I submit the Whole to your learned Judgment waiting for your Decision, which will save that of the Publick, or at least that will encourage me to expect a favourable from them.

London Aug.

10. 1714.

A

CATALOGUE

O F

Vanini's Writings.

- C**OMmentarii Physici. See his Dial. p. 88.
 Commentarii Medici. Ibid p. 88, 166.
 De Vera Sapientia. See Dial. p. 275 and *Garrasse's Curious Doctrine*, p. 1015.
 Tractatus Physico-Magicus. See Dial. p. 252.
 De Contemnenda Gloria. See Dial. p. 359.
 Apologia prolege Mosaica & Christiana. See his Amph. p. 38, 64, and Dial. p. 123, 329.
 Apologia pro Concilio Tridentino. See Amph. p. 70, 77.
 Libri Astronomici, printed at *Strasbourg*. See Dial. p. 31.
 Apologia pro Christiana Religione adversus Atheos. See Dial. p. 439. Mr. *La Croze* distinguishes this Piece from the others but I take it to be the same with the *Amphitheatre*.
 Amphitheatorum Æternæ providentiæ Divino-Magicum, Christiano-Physicum, Astrologico-Catholicum adversus veteres Philosophos, Atheos Epicureos Peripateticos, Stoicos &c. printed at *Lyons* with Priviledge and Approbation in 1615.
 Julii Cæsaris Vanini Neapolitani, Theologi, Philosophi & J. V. Doctoris, de admirandis Naturæ Reginæ Deæque Mortalium Arcanis, Lib. iv. printed at *Paris* for *Adrian Perrier*, 1616, with Priviledge and Approbation:

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